

# PUCK AND LUCK

STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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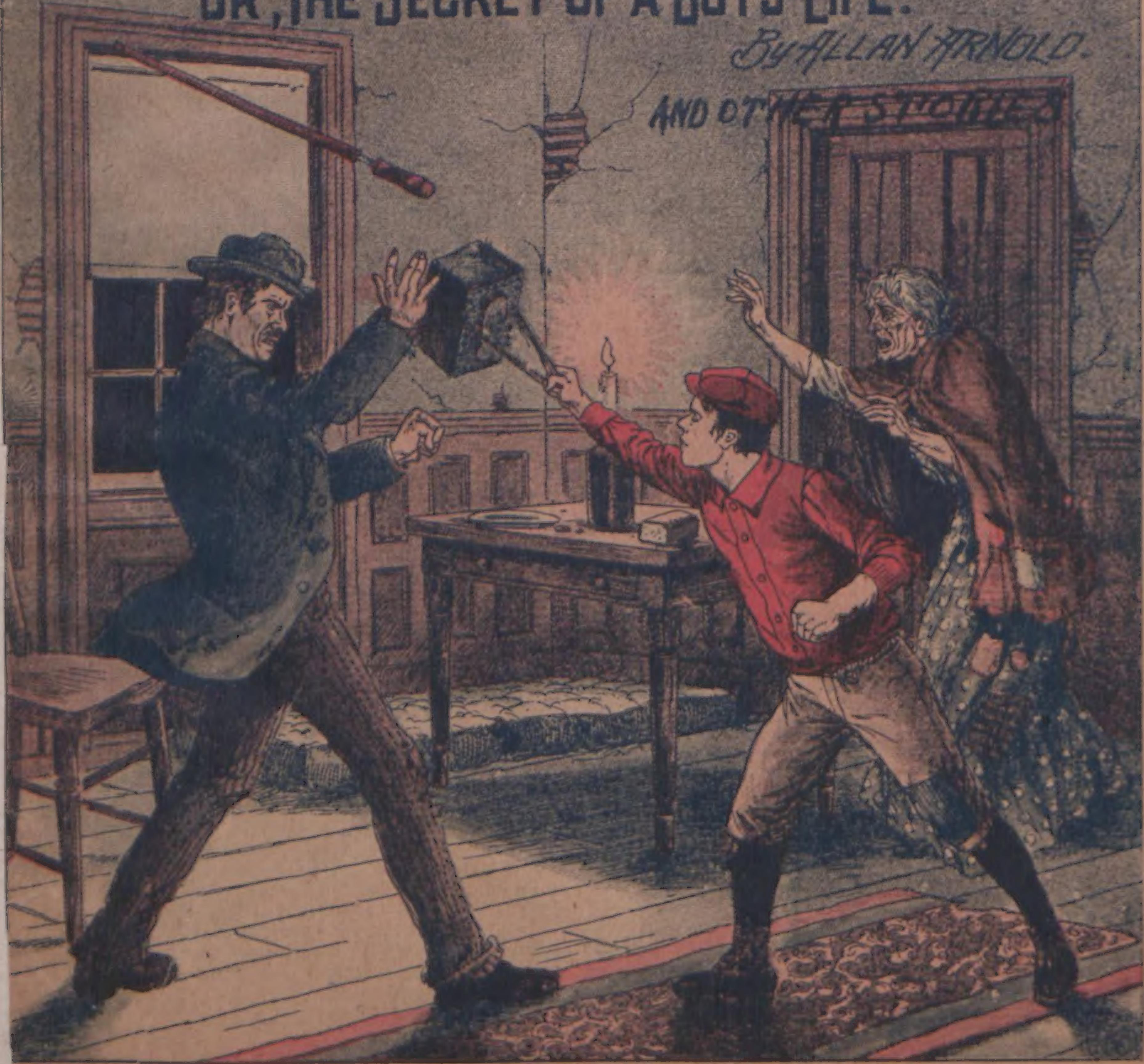
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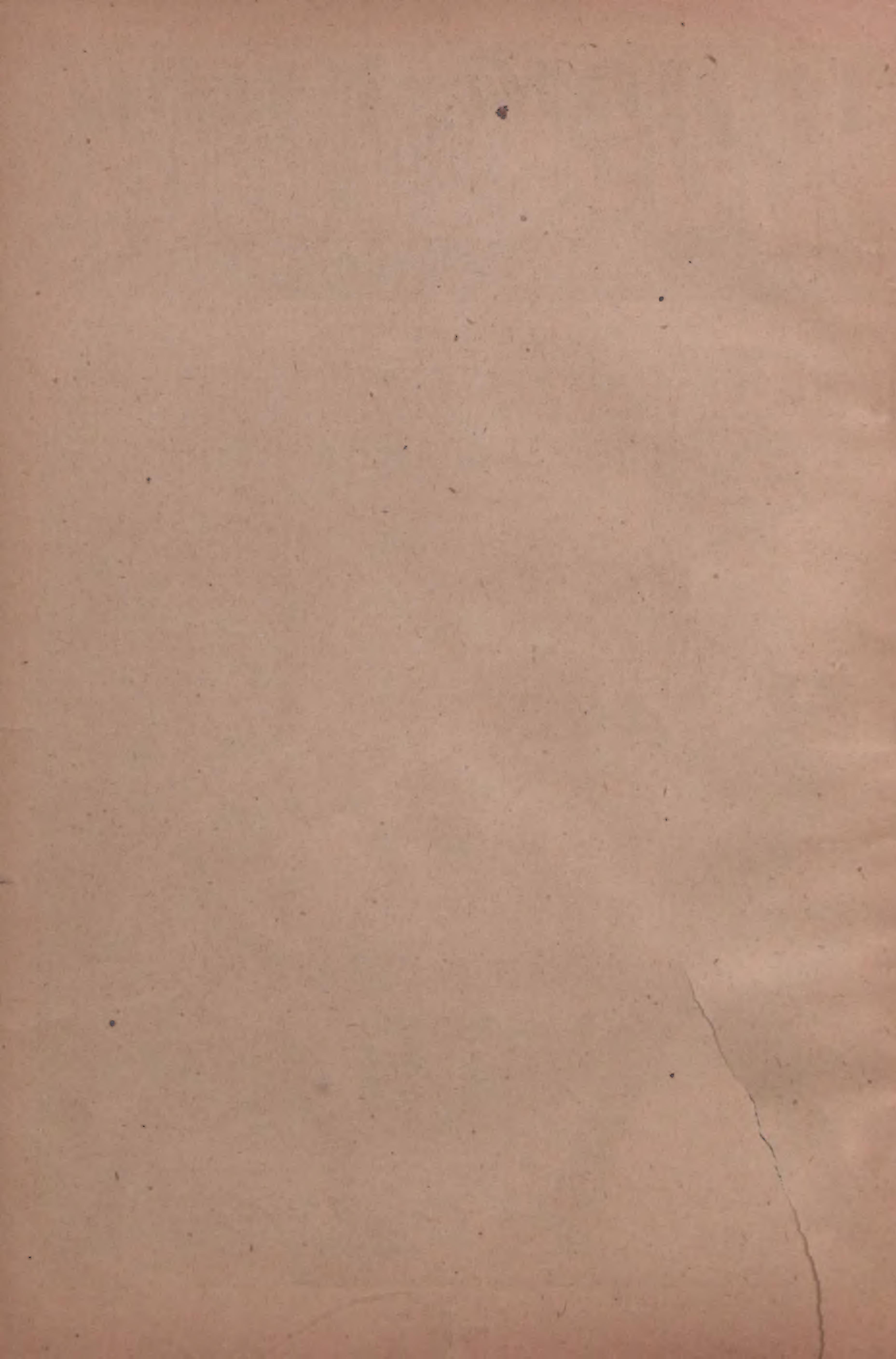
## SHINER, THE NEW-YORK BOOTBLACK; OR, THE SECRET OF A BOY'S LIFE.

By ALLAN ARNOLD.

AND OTHER STORIES



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## Shiner, the New York Bootblack OR, THE SECRET OF A BOY'S LIFE

By ALLAN ARNOLD

### CHAPTER I.—What Happened on the River.

"Say, fellers, what do yer say to goin' in swimmin'?"

"De cops is watchin' de docks dese nights, Shiner, and we'll get pinched."

"No, we won't, Jim. The cops knows all us boys."

"All de same dey'll nab us if we goes in off de docks. Ain't it so, Pete?"

"Yair, dere was a boiglary down on the steamer whoif on Toosday night, and the cops is particuliar."

There were five or six boys, bootblacks, newsboys and Arabs, sitting on the curb-stone on a hot night in summer, when the boy called Shiner came along and proposed that they go swimming in the river not far away.

"Come along, boys," said Shiner, leading the way and ending the discussion. "You'll feel bully after you've had a swim. Anyhow, it's cooler on the river than it is here."

"Dat's all right," said Pete, "but I wouldn't get pulled in for de woild. Last time I got chased me old woman took a bar'l stave to me and it hoit like de—"

"Tell us de rest when we get to de rock, Pete," said Jim, who had forgotten his first objections, and was now as eager as Shiner for a plunge in the cool waters of the river.

Shiner was a bootblack and was apparently about sixteen years of age, although he did not know how old he was nor even his name. When asked about it, his usual answer was:

"They call me Shiner because I shines shoes, that's all I know about it. Yes, I got another name—it's Dave, but I dunno what else, and I don't believe nobody does."

The boy lived with a hideous old woman in a tumble-down house on the west side that had once been a fine mansion, but was now so out of repair and so bound up in litigation that it was abandoned to the rats and spiders. The boys hurried off to the river, and Shiner showed them a place at the end of a wharf where they could put their clothes. Climbing back upon the pier he quickly undressed and made up a compact bundle, which included his cap, shoes, and blacking box as well as his clothes. Then he was over the end of the pier again in a moment, and before any of the boys could see where he had put his clothes, or if he had stowed them away at all, he was in the water.

"Hurry up, fellers, it's boss!" he cried, as he

swam with a long, easy stroke. "You don't know what you're missing."

The other boys quickly undressed, throwing their clothes on the pier and diving into the water, each striving not to be the last. Shiner had swam well out from the pier by this time, and as the boys came toward him he sank down and swam under water a short distance. Shiner was an adept at this sport, however, and he now sank down quietly, and when he was sufficiently deep to assure the success of his trick, began to swim toward the pier, rising at the same time. Rising quickly to the surface, he heard someone shout:

"Cheese it, fellers, cheese it, here's de cops!"

His companions were already swimming toward the pier, one of them having reached it, and began catching up his clothes.

A boat had shot out from the darkness of a neighboring wharf, and a shrill whistle sounded a few minutes later.

"Come in here, you robbers!" cried a gruff voice. "Come in here, or I'll send a bullet through yez."

"Not much I won't," muttered Shiner, as he swam gently along, working away from the pier and out into the current.

Then he heard a splash, and saw the boat he had already noticed was approaching. The oars rose and fell in a regular stroke, and as the boat came nearer Shiner could see that there were two persons in it, and that one appeared to be a woman.

"That's funny," he thought, as he floated on, making only enough movement to keep afloat and yet not attract attention. "The ferries are running yet; what do they want a boat for, I wonder?"

The rowing suddenly ceased, and Shiner heard the sound of oars being laid upon the thwarts.

"What are you stopping for?" the boy heard the woman in the boat say.

"Because we've gone far enough," answered the man in a harsh tone. "You know too much," and Shiner saw the man suddenly spring upon his companion and seize her by the throat. There was a shrill scream, not only one, for, as the terrified boy swam toward the boat he saw the woman suddenly throw up her hands and fall backwards. There was a splash, and then the sound of oars.

"Gee! She's been thrown overboard!" gasped the boy. "Help! Murder! Help!"

"Who's that? Curse the luck! I thought no

one saw me. Well, she won't tell anything, at all events."

A tug going down the river suddenly appeared, uttering a sharp whistle, and the boy was forced to swim toward the shore. When the tug had passed he looked around to see if there were any signs of the woman, but saw nothing of her.

"The bloke must ha' choked her before he chuck-ed her in," he mused, "and she sunk to the bot-tom."

He swam to the pier and secured his bundle of clothes, wiped himself reasonably dry with his hands, dressed, and set out for home, musing upon the tragedy that had taken place on the river under his very eyes, and wondering if he would ever hear more of it.

## CHAPTER II.—Mother Harpy and Her Strange Visitor.

Shiner went directly home without stopping to see any of his late companions, or to tell anyone what he had seen. Reaching the dilapidated old mansion, Shiner entered the lower door, the upper one being boarded up, and made his way in the dark toward the stairs.

"Shiner!" called a shrill, cracked voice from the floor above.

"Yes'm!" said the bootblack.

"What keeps you out so late?"

"Been swimmin' in the river, and— What do you say?"

A light suddenly appeared at the top of the stairs. An old, old woman, white-haired, and toothless, bent and feeble, dressed in a short stuff gown, and wearing a cloak about her shoulders, leaning on a staff, and bearing a lighted candle in her hand, appeared at the landing above.

"Davy, boy, I say," she cried. "Is that you?"

"Yes'm. I said so three times. Why don't you get—"

Did you lock the door?"

"No'm, 'cause you can't very well, seein' they ain't—"

"Go back and lock it. We can't have thieves breaking in and—"

"Oh, all right," and the boy went down again, presently returning.

There was no lock on the door, but the old woman often took strange notions and this was one of them.

"Did you lock the door, Davy?" she asked, when Shiner came up.

"Yes'm, that's all right."

There were two or three rickety chairs, a table with three legs, a mattress, and a length of soiled and faded carpet, the boards being bare with that exception.

"Sit down, Davy," said the old woman, seating herself and putting the bare candle in a bottle on the table. "You're a good boy and give me no trouble."

"That's all right, Mother Harpy. I only try to go what's—"

"No, no; don't call me that, boy. That's the name that wicked men give me. Call me 'Missus.' I like that. You'll be rich when I die, Davy, and

you must be a good boy till then. How much would you think I was worth, Davy?"

"Oh, I dunno, five or six millions, I reckon," an-swered Shiner, wishing to humor the strange creature.

"Five or six! He, he, too little, Davy, boy, too little. Say a hundred, two hundred, yes, three hundred, he, he, he, and it'll all be yours, boy, yours!"

The old woman was taken with a sudden fit of coughing, and presently arose, hobbled across the room, and took a bottle from a crazy cupboard nail to the once beautifull frescoed wall, putting it to her lips. When she returned she paid no attention to the boy, but sat gazing at the floor, apparently deeply buried in thought. For some time the old woman sat silent, and Shiner had begun to think that she had forgotten him en-tirely, and that he would better take himself off to bed when a peculiar knock was heard at the lower door. There were three sharp raps, a pause, and then a single loud knock. The old woman started up suddenly.

"What can he want, at this place, and at this hour?" she muttered, getting up.

"Shall I go see who it is, missus?" asked Shiner.

"No, you stay here," said the hag, taking the candle from the bottle, picking up her staff, and hobbling toward the door. "You stay here, Davy, while I go and let in our distinguished visitor—you stay here, you stay here!"

She went out still muttering, and Shiner was left in the dark. Descending to the lower hall, and standing at the foot of the once handsome stairway, the light of the candle falling upon the heavy mahogany railing and newel, she called out:

"Who knocks?"

"One who has business to do so," answered a voice outside.

"Come in, then," and a man hurriedly entered and closed the door behind him.

He was rather shabbily dressed, but carried a light cane in his left hand, and wore his hat tipped over his eyes.

"H'm, Cool Dick, is it?" said the hag. "Wel-come to my sumptuous apartments. What brings Cool Dick to me at—"

"Not Cool Dick, Mother Harpy," said the man. "Baxter Hampton sounds better and—"

"He, he! Cool Dick has taken another alias. He thinks that—he, he—" and the hag went tottering up the steps, leaving her visitor to fol-low or be left in the dark.

He followed her into the room above, and for a moment did not notice the boy seated near the table.

"Sit down, Mr. Baxter Hampton," said the hag, and the man seated himself, and as the old woman replaced the candle in the bottle, he suddenly caught sight of the boy Dave.

He started, paled slightly, glared at the boy, and asked:

"What's your name?"

"Shiner, the New York bootblack."

"That's not your real name."

The boy suddenly started in his turn.

"What is your real name?"

"Dave."

"What else?"

"I donno; it's just Dave, I guess, but it's more Shiner than anything else. The old woman, she calls me Davy; no one else does."

"Have you always lived here?"

"Guess not. I donno how long, two or three years, I reckon, maybe more; I can't tell."

"But you've always lived in New York?"

"No, I ain't. I lived some place else once, I was in a circus, rode horses and done tricks and done trapeze business, but the man used to lick me, and I shook him and come here."

"How old were you at that time?"

"Oh, I donno—I was just a kid—donno much about it. I could do all sorts o' things—jump on horses' backs when they were flying around the ring, stand on a man's head and do all them stunts."

"And you left that glorious life? You were a foolish boy, Dave!"

"Ah, no, I wasn't!" retorted Shiner. "I used to get kicked and knocked around, and there wasn't only one what treated me decent, and she—"

The boy suddenly sprang up and seized his box.

"Gee! I remember her now!" he cried. "That was Tillie, the only white one in the whole show. Yes, Tillie! That was her, and she—oh!"

He suddenly stopped and looked fixedly at the man before him, horror stamped upon his young face.

"What's the matter?"

"Yes, that's it!" cried the boy, shrilly. "Tillie! That's her, and she's the very woman you threw in the river to-night!"

"What! You saw—"

"The whole business!"

### CHAPTER III.—An Overwhelming Surprise.

For an instant Cool Dick, or Baxter Hampton, whichever his true name was, stood as though turned to stone. Then he seized his cane, which he had laid upon the table, and sprang at Shiner. The boy was too quick for him, and had evidently apprehended some such movement upon his part. Swinging his box suddenly around by its strap, he sent the fellow's cane flying into a far corner of the room. It fell with a metallic ring, and seemed to come apart, although Shiner did not see this. He quickly retreated, reached the door, slammed it behind him as he dashed out into the hall, and then, in spite of the darkness, found the stairs without the slightest trouble, scampered down them and along the black hall, and in a moment was in the street. Cool Dick threw open the door, and was about to follow the boy, when the light suddenly went out. For a moment the man stood motionless, awed by the silence and the darkness. Then he spoke angrily:

"Hallo, I say; what's the meaning of this infernal— Hallo, show a light, can't you!"

There was no answer.

"Here, what the deuce—where have you got to? What did you want to put out the light for just when I— What in blazes is this?"

He had suddenly run against the crazy old table, which fell to the floor with a crash. He took a match from his pocket, struck it on his boot, and looked about him. The place was de-

serted. Mother Harpy had disappeared, but how or in what direction he could not tell. The match suddenly went out, leaving the room darker than before. The man struck another and moved toward the door.

"There's no use waiting here any longer. Where's my cane? I may want it. Blast the luck, what's become of the candle? Oh, there it is! That's better."

Relighting the candle, he looked for his cane, and finding it pushed the handle down into the stick, concealing a thin blade of fine steel, which had before shown for a few inches. In fact, it was a sword cane that he carried, and in the hands of such a man would prove a most dangerous weapon. Having recovered it he made his way to the door and downstairs, muttering angrily to himself.

"H'm!" he growled as he threw open the outer door and passed out into the street. "I thought that by silencing Tillie I had fixed everything, but there's more to be done yet, dash the luck!"

Then he went away, leaving the tumbledown mansion as dark and deserted and silent as before. Meanwhile Shiner had not remained in the neighborhood, but had hurried away from it as from the plague. He suddenly found himself at the river, upon which the moon now shone, lighting up the shipping and the opposite shore.

"Guess I might turn in at the old pier and get a snooze," he said to himself.

He made his way to the end of the pier, where he had put away his clothes two or three hours before, without attracting any attention, and was soon snugly tucked away in a hole under the planking. He soon fell into a dreamless sleep, and did not awaken till he heard the sound of wagons overhead, and the swashing of the water just outside. He climbed out and walked toward the street, no one paying him the slightest attention. A few minutes later he accosted a gentleman just coming out of the ferry-house.

"Shine, gent? Give you a first class one."

"You're early getting to business," said the other, standing against the ferry-house and putting up his foot.

"Yes, gotter be these days," and Shiner went vigorously to work.

"You've made a dollar or two already, I suppose?"

"Gee! wisht I had. No, I ain't made nothin', but I expect to. Gotter get my grub before I settles down fur the day."

"But you make a good living, don't you—four or five dollars a day at least?"

Shiner stopped, looked up at the speaker and laughed.

"Ah, say, you're coddin', ain't you. Who give you that guff about we fellows makin' all that money?"

"Why, I've read that some of you New York bootblacks have very good bank-accounts, and—"

"Ah, yes, we have—I don't think! Some o' the Dagoes might, 'cause they never spends a cent and lives on nuthin', but white fellers can't do that. Other foot, gent!"

"Then you don't save any money?"

"You bet your life I do, but I ain't makin' no four an' five dollars a day, all the same. If I get it in a week I'm lucky."

"And you support your mother and your little brothers and sisters on that, I suppose?"

"Gee!" and the boy laughed. "Somebody's been stuffin' you, mister. Do you live in Jersey? I see you come by the boat."

"No, I live in New York. But what has that to do with it?"

"Oh, nuthin' only I didn't s'pose New Yorkers was so green. I ain't got no mother nor brothers and sisters, and if I had, how fur do you think what I make would go toward keepin' 'em? Where'd you pick up that fairly story, anyhow?"

"You're quite an iconoclast, aren't you, destroying all one's fine ideas concerning boot-blacks?"

"I dunno, I guess so. Nickel, please?"

"Here's a quarter, and you can earn a dollar more by taking a note for me to a house uptown."

"How fur is it?"

"Up near the Park on Fifth avenue. You know the way?"

"Oh, I can find it, I guess."

"Well, here's the note, and here's the dollar. There won't be any answer but I expect you to deliver it."

"Much obliged! I'll go up in the elevator soon as I get my hash. So-long, gent."

Then he hurried away, thinking to himself:

"He didn't ask me my name or where I lived or nuthin'. Well, some o' the boys would call this a puddin', but I'm goin' ter take the note all the same. Gee! I never asked him the number or name nor nuthin'. I'll have to go and get the missus to read it for me. Guess that feller ain't there now."

When he reached the old mansion he found both doors boarded up and nailed, and further secured by heavy iron bars placed across them and fastened with padlocks.

"Hallo, what's all this? Hallo, Pete," to a boy standing a few rods distant, "what's up? Where's the missus?"

"She's moved, and all the foiniture and ev'rything went out only this morn'."

"Gee!" said the boy, upon whom the conviction had rulely forced itself that he was without a friend, without a home.

#### CHAPTER IV.—Shiner Remembers His Old Training.

"Are you sure you saw the old woman move out, Pete?" asked Shiner, when he had recovered from the first shock of surprise at finding his old home barred against him.

"Soitainly; dat is me mudder saw her go out. I ain't sure about the foiniture, but anyhow de place is locked up, isn't it?"

"Well, maybe she'll come back," said Shiner. "Say, Pete, can you read?"

"What is it, newspaper printin'?"

"No, it's writin', it's on a letter."

"Nope, I can't read writin', but me mudder kin, only she's gone out washing to-day, and—"

"Well, I'll get somebody to read it, I guess. I know about where it is."

"What, ver gotter do, take a letter to some puyson?"

"Yes; away uptown, and I haven't had me grub yet."

Shiner hurried away, for he felt that if he stayed any longer near the old home he could not keep back the tears.

"I feel just like I did the time I ran away from the circus," he mused, as he went up the street. "I hated to leave, and I couldn't say good-by to Tillie, and that was the wust part of it. She was good to me, too, and now—well, I won't think of it. Hey! Want a shine?"

"No, I don't!" growled the man whom Shiner had addressed, and then he gave a suddenly start as he caught sight of the boy's face.

"Well, you don't have to, but if I was you I'd shine that temper of yours a bit; it's awful rusty."

"Get out o' here or I'll smash you face open," retorted the other, aiming a blow at the boy.

His fist struck the corner of Shiner's box, which had been cleverly thrown up in a good time.

"Yah, you can't hurt the box none," laughed Shiner, as he ran off.

Reaching one of the avenues the boy secured two or three ten-cent jobs, and then, feeling that he was entitled to his breakfast, went into a cheap restaurant and ordered something to eat.

"Say, mister, can you read what this says?" he asked the waiter who took his order, showing him the letter.

"Can't you read it yourself?"

"No. The man gimme it to take up, and I forgot to ask him. Mebby he thought I could read, 'cause he thought I made four or five dollars a day shinin'. Say, that'd be a great graft, wouldn't it?"

"I guess it would. Well, that says No. — Fifth avenue, near Fifty-seventh street. You can't miss it."

"Thanks, and now gimme something, for I'm most starved."

"All right, young feller; I'll fix you right away."

Having finished his breakfast, the boy walked to the nearest elevated railroad station. Shiner boarded a train and left it at Fifty-eighth street and walked through to Fifth avenue. He had turned down the avenue and was looking for the number he wanted, when, in front of a house at the junction of a cross street he noticed a party of ladies and gentlemen mounted on horses. One of the ladies—a pretty young woman of about twenty—had already mounted, and her companion was about to do so. At that moment a heavily-loaded beer wagon came dashing through the street, the driver being either reckless or having lost control of his team. A barrel on the top tier suddenly rolled to the ground with a crash and burst open. In an instant the lady's horse took fright and dashed off at full speed up the avenue. Her companion's horse followed in a moment before the gentleman could mount. The young lady screamed and seemed terrified beyond measure. Her silk hat flew off and her golden hair, becoming loosened, was blown about in the wind. Shiner did not hesitate an instant in deciding what was to be done. As the horses came racing along he sprang into the street. The old instinct seized him, and his former training came to his raid. Running alongside the riderless horse he placed one hand on his side, sprang up, and in a second was in the saddle. Seizing the reins

in his right hand he clutched them tightly and urged the horse forward. In a moment he was at the young lady's side.

"Don't be afraid, ma'am," he cried. "I can manage this one if you can take care of yours."

His brown hair fluttered from under his coarse cap, and his box slung over his shoulder flew straight out. In dashed the horses toward the main entrance to the park, but a sudden outcry was raised. A wagon belonging to one of the city departments was standing directly across the path of the flying steeds. The young lady turned suddenly pale, and seemed about to faint. The reins slipped from her grasp, her eyes closed, her head dropped upon one side, and she seemed about to reel from the saddle. Shiner turned his horse in close to hers, and reached out an arm to seize her. In another moment she had fallen. The boy's arm was around her in an instant. With the greatest dexterity more than strength he quickly threw the girl upon the saddle in front of him, and dashed on. Her head rested upon his shoulder, her golden hair mingled with his brown locks, her gloved hand rested in his brown palm. Swerving his steed suddenly to the right the boy passed the obstructions in safety, and dashed into the park.

"Whoa, old chap, whoa, steady there, take it easy now, beauty; whoa, I say; take your time, my boy!"

The firm grip on the reins, the soothing tones, and, above all, the knowing that an expert was handling him, soon quieted the horse, and he moderated his speed to a canter, then to a walk, and then stopped. The young lady's horse had followed, and when Shiner drew rein by the roadside he came up and halted alongside his mate.

"Here's fun!" muttered the boy. "She's fainted and don't know nuthin'. Women is queer things anyway. Wonder where the other folks is? I donno what to do for faintin' women. I never had no practice with 'em."

In a few moments a gray-coated policeman came up.

"Here, what are you doing with them horses?"

Before Shiner could answer a groom and two or three gentlemen came up, and lifted the young lady from the saddle. While the gentlemen were endeavoring to revive her, Shiner disappeared.

## CHAPTER V.—Shiner's Reward.

Having done what he considered only his plain duty, Shiner did not consider it incumbent upon him to remain after the young lady's friends had come up, and so he had quietly taken himself off, and was now enjoying to the full sights which appealed to him more strongly than he had had any notion of, and which aroused in him a longing to be something more than a poor street waif, that he might be more among such beautiful scenes. He was walking leisurely on, following the paths at random, drinking in the pure air, watching the varied hues of the foliage, the shapes of the trees, and the changing landscapes, when he suddenly stopped and exclaimed:

"Gee! I gotter give that letter the gent sent me up with. Blow me if I didn't clean forget it!"

I could stay here all day, but I can't all the same."

He came out of the park and started down Fifth avenue in search of the house to which his letter was directed. He found it, and was surprised to see that it was the same one from which the runaway horse had started.

"Gee! I was there before, and didn't know it," he muttered. "Maybe the letter was for the lady."

Going to the lower door the rang the bell, and in a few moments a sour-visaged woman came out, and peering through the iron gate, said sharply:

"Go away, boy. We don't give anything to beggars."

"I ain't beggin', ma'am. I've got a letter for the lady, and I—"

"No, nor we don't want to buy any needles, and we haven't anything to give to a poor boy who's trying to earn a living. Go on about your business with your begging letters."

All this was said very volubly and at the end of it the sharp-featured woman flounced inside and banged the door behind her.

"I wonder if rich folks always treat poor folks like that?" mused the boy, as he stood irresolute for a few moments. "'Cause I've got a blackin' box they think I'm a beggar. Well, she ain't the boss. I come up here to give this letter, and I'm goin' ter do it."

Walking out of the courtyard he ascended the stoop and rang the bell of the main entrance without the slightest trepidation. After waiting several minutes he was confronted by a stiff, solemn-looking footman who said, without the slightest animation:

"Lower door for peddlers, beggars, etc., upper door for the guests."

He was about to close the door when Shiner, interposing his box, said:

"Ah, say, mister, don't gimme dat steer! The lady downstairs gimme it once. I ain't no beggar. I was sent here with a letter for somebody and here it is."

"Lower door for letters, etc., upper door for guests," said the man in the same imperturbable tone. "Remove the obstruction, young man."

"Won't you take it?" said Shiner, holding out the letter. "I ain't a postman. It was gimme by a gent downtown, who said—"

"What's the trouble, Martin?" asked a pleasant voice, and Shiner heard the rustle of a dress, and then saw a sweet face just beyond the stolid one of the footman.

"Young bootblacking person with a letter, Miss Mattie, persists in delivering a letter at the—"

"Why, it's the boy!" cried the other, and in a moment there came forward the very young lady whom Shiner had saved from death an hour or two before.

She was now dressed in a soft, cream-colored dress of some clinging stuff which showed her dainty figure to advantage, her golden hair clustering about her head and enhancing her natural beauty.

"You have a letter for me?" she said. "Come right in, I am real glad to see you. They said that you went away, and I did not have time to thank you for what you did. You undoubtedly saved my life, and—"

"That's all right, ma'am," said Shiner. "I

wouldn't do anything else. You see, I used to be with horses, and it was nuthin' to jump on that one's back. Here's the letter, ma'am, a nice looking gent gimme it downtown and axed me to bring it up there, and—"

"Oh, yes, that's all right; it's for me," and the young lady colored slightly. "Here, let me pay you for you trouble."

"No'm, you needn't ter, the gent gimme a dollar, and that's all it's worth."

"But you certainly deserve some reward for what you did in the park. But for you I would have been killed. Come in and sit down, and I will—"

Shiner flushed deeply, looked down at his rough clothes and stammered:

"I don't want nuthin' fur that, ma'am, I'd do it again fur nuthin' if I had to. I guess I won't come in. I ain't dressed up—and I've got to get back to work, ma'am."

"What is your name then, my boy?! I wish to remember you."

"They call me Shiner, the New York bootblack, but my name is Dave, ma'am, just Dave, that's all."

"And you black shoes?"

"Yes'm, but I used to be in a circus, only I didn't like it and run away."

The young lady took a little gold chain to which a tiny watch was attached from around her neck, and said:

"I won't offer you any money, David, since you don't like to take it, but you must let me give you this, and some day—"

"But I don't like to, ma'am, 'cause it looks as if I expected to get paid when I done what I did, and I never thought nuthin' o' the kind. I just done it because I had to. I couldn't see a pretty lady like you chucked under the horses' hoofs, and if I'd been killed myself I'd have done it just the same," said Shiner, with honest admiration, blushing to his eyebrows.

The girl blushed in her turn, and then putting the pretty trinket in the boy's hand, and closing it with her own, said:

"There, you must keep it to remember this day by, and if you ever need a friend, come to me. Will you?"

"Yes'm, I will," said Shiner, the tears standing in his eyes. "Good-by, ma'am, and thanks, ever so much."

Then, as if not daring to trust himself longer, he made his escape, ran down the steps, and quickly disappeared.

"If anyone wishes to see me, Martin, no matter who it is, nor how roughly he may be dressed never refuse him," said the young lady to the stolid footman, as she turned to go upstairs.

"Yes, miss."

"That boy saved my life, and if he ever comes again, let me know at once."

"Yes, miss," said Martin, as immovably as before, but when Miss Mattie had gone, he remarked to himself: "Well, for an aristocrat, Miss Mattie has the queerest ways. The idea of her asking that shabby bootblack into the drawing-room. Society would be shocked if it should hear of such a thing. That all comes of reading the newspapers and going to meetings about woman's rights and such. If everybody was like that here I should really have to accept another situation."

Meanwhile Shiner, hurrying downtown, was saying to himself:

"She's a lady, sure, and I wouldn't give this thing away if I was to die for it. She said she'd be my friend. Well, she looks like she meant it, and if I ever get into a fix I'll know where to go, sure."

Shiner now went to live with Peter Green's mother. The boy always took his blacking box up to his bedroom at night. One night Peter asked him why he did it, and Shiner told him there were things in it that he always kept near him. Quizzed by Peter the boy took out the watch Miss Mattie had given him, a colored lithograph of a boy standing on the back of a horse, also a locket and chain and a little shirt made of the softest wool and edged with lace. Mrs. Green just then came into the room and when she saw the shirt asked what it was.

"It is a little shirt I wore when I was a kid," said Shiner, "and I have always kept it with the locket and chain in my blacking box."

Mrs. Green thought there must be some mystery about Shiner. One day as Shiner was walking along he saw a woman coming out of a side street, and as he looked at her he exclaimed:

"Why, if it ain't Tillie! She wasn't drowned after all! Hello, Tillie!"

But the lady paid no attention to him but passed right on. Shiner was perplexed.

"Poor thing, it's turned her head, the toss overboard."

Shiner turned to go uptown when a man knocked against his box, the lid flew open, and out rolled the little watch Mattie had given him. Shiner stooped to pick it up when the stranger seized him and called:

"Here, officer, arrest this boy. He is a thief and has stolen that watch."

"It's a lie," said Shiner.

"Come with me," said the officer, taking hold of Shiner and leading him away.

Shiner was taken to the station-house and the man, who gave his name as Hamilton Wardrake, made a charge of thievery against him. Shiner told his story and the captain of police, who had read the account of the rescue by Shiner, discharged him and called down his accuser, who had said he was a friend of Miss Mattie Winterton and knew the watch. Shiner the next day met the man who had given him the letter to deliver, and he complimented Shiner on his rescue of Miss Mattie, and said that lady had asked him to bring Shiner to see her. He also said that he would fit the boy out in new clothes, so he could make his visit in good shape. It was to be his reward for saving the girl's life. The man stated that Mattie was a dear friend of his. So Shiner promised to go and the man took Shiner to an outfitter's.

## CHAPTER VI.—Decoyed.

Shiner's friend, who had finally introduced himself as Harold Carstone, had the boy fitted out from head to foot with everything he required, so that Shiner left the store wearing nothing that he had worn when he entered it. The old clothes and the extras were sent to Mrs. Green's.

Mr. Carstone had wanted Shiner to dine with him, but the boy had begged off from this, and his friend did not insist, but made him promise that he would certainly be at the Wintertons' that evening. He had gone back to Mrs. Green's, and told his friends of his good fortune. Dave arrived at the Wintertons' at an early hour, and was received by the supercilious Martin with the utmost suavity, and requested to step into the drawing-room. Mr. Carstone arrived shortly afterwards and before the young lady had come down. The two callers greeted each other cordially, and were talking together animatedly when Mattie entered.

"Why, Davy, how fine you look!" she cried, and going up to the boy, who had risen to greet her, she kissed him, and shook hands at the same time.

"I say, Shiner, you're in luck!" laughed Carstone.

"The boy must not be called Shiner any more," said Mattie. "He must have a name. We can't call him just David and nothing else."

"As you won't have any use for your own name in a little while," said Carstone, mischievously, "you might give it to him."

"We'll see about it," said Mattie. "Now, David, you're to go into business into a store, and you're to begin on Monday morning. My father has found you a place with his old partners. You are to live in a better neighborhood, and a place has already been—"

"Don't tell me any more, Miss Mattie," said Dave. "Seems to me you're doin' too much anyhow, 'cause—"

The bell had rung, but nobody had paid any particular attention to it, and at this moment the footman announced Mr. Hamilton Wardrake. Mattie received him with cold politeness, and Carstone nodded, but Dave's face grew suddenly red, and he felt as though he would choke.

"Ah, this is my young friend of this afternoon, is it not?" he said, extending his hand. "How do you do? I made a mistake and I am quite sorry. Won't you shake hands?"

Dave had put his hands behind him, and he kept them there as he answered after a strong effort to control himself:

"You called me a thief and had me arrested. I don't want to shake hands with a feller—"

"Why, David, what is this? You did not tell me—"

"I am very sorry and wish to make amends," said Wardrake in his oiliest tones, his hand still extended. "Now will you shake hands?"

Dave looked at Mattie, then at Carstone, and back to Mattie again, his face aflame and his brain in a tumult.

"No," he said at length, in a low tone. "We won't say no more about it, if I say you're sorry, but I don't want ter shake hands. I only shake ha— with — really true friends."

"As you please," said Wardrake, showing all his teeth. "It's perfectly immaterial to me what you do. I wished to make amends, but since you are so ungracious as to—"

"Mr. Wardrake," interrupted the young lady, "I would rather the matter be dropped. The young gentleman is my guest."

Wardrake remained about half an hour, try-

ing his best to make the conversation animated and succeeding very badly. Mr. Winterton came in and engaged him in conversation, the others retiring to a corner to discuss Dave's prospects, but in a short time the unwelcome guest excused himself and retired.

"Things are even better than they were this afternoon," he muttered, as he left the house. "If the boy comes here I can always put my hand on him, and at the right moment I shall do it."

When Dave went home that evening he said to Mrs. Green:

"I've gotter learn to read and write, or I'll be in a hole. I've got a job now, and I can't go on this way no longer. Will you learn me, Mis' Green?"

"I'll do what I can, Dave," said the good woman, "though I don't know so much myself. Pete can read print, and he'll show yer some, and I'll do the rest."

The lessons began the next day, and the boy gave all his time to acquiring the knowledge he had so long been deprived of. He got along fairly well in the store, and found the people at his new home more or less congenial, although he had Pete up to see him and give him lessons nearly every evening. Two weeks passed. when one day, as he was going into the post-office he saw for an instant only a man, the sight of whom gave him an uneasy feeling.

"That was Charley Dawson, if I ain't mistaken," he muttered, as he hurried into the building. "What's he doing in New York? I don't want to see him."

He left the building by a different entrance and saw no more of the man. The latter at that moment was talking to the rough fellow who had discovered Dave two or three weeks previous.

"You are right, Bill Pidgeon," he said. "It's Davy sure enough. He's bigger, but he'd be good for the business yet, and I must have him."

"You leave it to me, gov'nor," said the other. "When Bill Pidgeon undertakes a job he generally carries it out."

The next day as Dave was about leaving the store, expecting to meet Pete on a corner a few streets further uptown, a messenger-boy brought him a telegram.

"Telegram for Dave Shiner," he said. "That you? Sign de book here."

"Gee!" said Shiner, blushing, "I can't read writing good yet. You read it for me. I can sign my name, but nuthin' else. Read what it says!"

The message ran as follows:

"Davy.—Come to the old house right away. The old woman is sick and wants to see you.—

"Mrs. Peter Green."

"Gee! I'll go right away!" said Dave. "Wonder what's the matter with her?"

He hurried away, forgetting all about meeting Pete, and going up West street instead of Broadway. When he was near the old house he suddenly met a man, who said to him:

"Say, you're looking for Mother Harpy, ain't you? Well, she's around the corner. We had to take her out of the old house; it was too damp."

Dave followed the man, when, as he entered a hallway, he was suddenly seized and hurried into

## SHINER, THE NEW YORK BOOTBLACK

a room at the end of a long, dark passage. Here he was put in a chair, to which he was tightly bound, his captor saying:

"Now that's all right, and here's the governor."

At that moment another man entered, and Dave recognized his former tyrant, Charley Dawson.

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CHAPTER VII.—Mr. Dawson Makes A Plain Statement.

"Well, Dave, you're glad to see me, ain't you?" laughed the man, with an evil leer. "Ready to go into the old business?"

"No, I ain't."

"Well, you will be, that's all. It's either that or being sent to sea on a ship, never to come back. There's two fellows wants you—me and another one. I'll put you in the circus biz and make your fortune. The other fellow will send you to sea or dump you in the river when the tide's going out, after knocking you on the head, and he'll make a fortune, so he says, but you won't get any of it. I suppose you're going with me in preference to that?"

"No, I ain't," said Dave, "and I ain't going down the river on the tide, either."

"Now, then, you're a sensible fellow, and I think I know which way you'll decide. Bill Pidgeon got onto you t'other day and told me. Cool Dick saw you and told Bill Pidgeon to nab you for him, and here you are. Now, if I like I can let Bill play into Cool Dick's hands and get a fine plum for soaking you on the head, and then we divide or I can snake you out o' the way to Australia or South America or Europe, and let him whistle for you while you and me are making our pile. Ain't that a fair offer? It's death on one side, and it's life and fortune on the other. Now, I'll let you think this over, and I'll see you later. Come on, Bill."

The two men went away, and Dave heard the key turn in the lock and the sound of retreating footsteps in the hall. A cold sweat broke out upon his forehead; he felt weak, as if about to faint, and it seemed for a few moments as if he was losing the nerve that Dawson had said he possessed.

"What does anybody want to kill me for?" he muttered. "I never hurt anybody. What has Cool Dick got against me? This, I saw him try to down Tillie, and that's why. Well, he won't get the best o' me this time!"

He tugged at the ropes that bound him, but could not loosen them, so he resolved to wait patiently till the men returned, and then watch his chance to escape. He must have been two or three hours in the place when he noticed that it was growing lighter, and at last the moonbeams entered at the little window, and made the room a trifle more cheerful.

In a little while he heard a footfall in the passage outside. Then the key turned in the lock, and in a moment the door opened.

"Oh, you're there still, are you?" asked Bill Pidgeon.

"Yes; I thought I'd wait and say 'good-by' myself, 'stead o' skipping out and not sayin' nothin'."

The man walked around to the window, so as to be in front of Dave, and then said:

"Here, I've brought yer something to drink. Open yer mouth."

"What is it? I ain't drinkin' anything I don't know nuthin' about. Give it to me in my own hands."

"All right," and the man came closer.

Then the boy suddenly perceived a most pungent odor, gasped, and then of a sudden lost all consciousness.

"Good!" muttered Bill. "And now to do the job quick!"

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CHAPTER VIII.—Bill Pidgeon Sells Out to the Highest Bidder.

Peter Green waited at Broadway and Lispenard street until after six o'clock, and then when Dave did not come he grew impatient.

"That's the woist I ever heard of," he remarked. "I didn't think Shiner'd go back on a feller like that."

Then he began to think that maybe his friend had been delayed, and he started down Broadway to meet him. He reached the street where the store was situated, and turning down, soon stood in front of it. The store was closed, and everybody has apparently left it.

"That's funny," he mused. "I couldn't have missed him. I don't see through this at all."

As he stood looking at the closed doors his eye caught sight of a crumpled paper near the doorstep, and he stooped mechanically and picked it up.

"Somebody's telegraph," he muttered, smoothing it out. "Why, it's for Shiner! I can make that much out, and—why, what the deuce—Mrs. Peter Green! Why, that's me mudder. What the deuce is the telegraphin' to Dave for? Maybe she's sick and—my! I'd better get home!"

Putting the message in his pocket, Pete hurried home as fast as he could run, arriving all in a perspiration. The first person he saw was his mother.

"Hallo! Ain't you sick?"

"No, I ain't!"

"Well, where's Shiner?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"Well, what yer want to send for him for?"

"I didn't."

"Didn't you send this?" and Pete produced the message.

"No, I didn't, and—why, I bet it's a plot to get hold— Run right around to the old house, Pete, and see if Dave is there."

"Soitenly; but what does the letter say?"

Mrs. Green read the message, and Pete exclaimed:

"That's why Shiner didn't toin up. Have you seen the old woman at all?"

"No, I tell you, and the whole thing is some game to get hold of Shiner."

"Well, but what for?"

"I donno. Maybe it's the man that had him arrested, or maybe the man he saw on the river that night found it out, and is going to get—Run right up there, Pete, and stop him."

Pete needed no second admonition, and went at once. When he reached the old house where

Dave had lived, he found it boarded up as before, and no sign of life within. He waited around until it grew dark, but no one either entered or left the house, no lights appeared in it, and it seemed to be totally deserted.

"What in the world am I going to do?" he muttered. "He's been here and gone again, and I'm just waitin' fur nothin'. I'd like to know if he's in there or not."

He finally asked the grocer on the corner if the old woman had returned, or if he had seen Dave.

"No," said the man, in answer to both questions. "I didn't think Davy came down this way any more. Don't he live uptown now?"

"Soitainly, but he comes to my house sometimes, and—well, somebody's nabbed him, that's all."

He returned to the old house and watched it for a long time when, feeling hungry and tired and out of patience, he muttered:

"Ah, that's the woist! I don't believe he come here at all. I can't find him, and I guess I'd better go home."

He left the house and had reached the second or third street beyond when a carriage came rattling along, and he stopped on the curve to let it go by.

A carriage drove closely through the street where stood the house to which Dave had been taken. The lamps were not lighted, and the curtains were drawn down over the windows. The driver seemed to be careless of seeking employment, for he sat listlessly on his box, and looked neither to the right nor the left. Suddenly a light tapping was heard on the high window in front just behind him. He brought his horses to a pause in an instant. The carriage stopped at the curb, a few doors from a certain house, which appeared to be more dark and deserted than any of its neighbors. The large door nearest the curb was opened, and a man looked out. He wore a low-crowned soft hat, and a black silk mask concealed all the lower part of his face, his eyes alone being visible.

"Not ready yet?" he muttered, as he uttered a low whistle.

Then from the door of the fourth house there suddenly stepped out a roughly-dressed man, carrying something in his arms. As he came out into the light it was seen to be the limp and unconscious form of a handsome boy of sixteen.

"Here you are, Dick," said the roughly-dressed fellow, approaching the carriage. "and the sooner you get away before Charley finds out how I've got hold of the letter for both of us!"

"That's all right, Bill," said Mr. Baxter Hampton, alias Cool Buck. "Put him in and get in yourself. You'll make more money out of this boy than you would if you had let Dawson put him up in a circus."

Bill Pidgeon lifted the unconscious Dave into the carriage, and placed him on the rear seat, riding out to him and supporting him with one arm. Then the door was shut and the carriage rattled off. As it was whirling through a narrow street, and had nearly reached the intersection of a wider one, the boy suddenly fell forward. Bill Pidgeon seized him, but at that moment the curtain, the cord of which had been

caught by the boy's hand, suddenly flew up and Dave's pale face was revealed at the window, the light of the moon shining full upon it.

A boy at the curb, waiting for the carriage to go by, uttered a startled exclamation:

"Heavens and oaths, there's Shiner now!"

In an instant Dave was drawn back upon the seat, and the shade was pulled down.

"Who was that?" whispered Baxter Hampton.

"I'm, one of the cub's bootblack friends, I suppose," he muttered. "Well, we'll soon leave him behind."

Then he rapped in a peculiar manner on the front window. The driver evidently understood what was meant, for he whipped up his horses and went dashing along the street at a terrific pace.

"That feller's after me," muttered Pete, as the carriage suddenly shot ahead. "If I hadn't hollered out he wouldn't have known."

The boy continued to run after the carriage, keeping in the dark as much as possible, now gaining and again losing ground. Luck favored him at last when he was nearly exhausted and was about to give up the chase in despair. A fire engine came tearing through a principal street into which the carriage was about to turn. The driver stopped suddenly so as to let the engine go by. Screened by the darkness, Pete darted forward, sprang upon the rack behind, and perched himself upon it, his head coming a few inches below the window. In another minute the carriage went on. Baxter Hampton, peering out, looked over the head of the boy and directed his vision straight out and not down, and therefore saw nothing.

"We've given him the shake," he said.

At the same instant Pete Green was saying to himself:

"I'm dead game onto these fellows, and I'll find out where they takes Dave if they go around the world! They can't shake me now, you betcher life!"

The carriage suddenly collided with another vehicle and Pete was knocked off his perch. The carriage was not damaged any, but its occupants were considerably shaken up, and Dave fell heavily to the floor. This brought him to, but he did not let the two villains know this. Meantime Pete had been stunned by his fall from the carriage rack and was unable to follow it any farther. Therefore he went home.

Dave sat on the floor of the carriage, listening to the conversation of the two villains Bill and Cool Buck, in which Mother Harry's name was mentioned and that Dave's father was rich, but no name was given. Just then the carriage swung into Nineteenth street and stopped suddenly before a house that the villains once again to and fro about. At the same time Pete sprang up, over the carriage, and springing out, dashed down the street at full speed. It was some few minutes before the occupants of the carriage realized what had occurred. Then they were furious and ordered the driver to follow the boy. But the boy had disappeared and could not be seen. Then, finally, the Bill and Cool Buck followed, set out for the old home, and as he reached a lighted corner saw the woman Tillie standing near the street lamp.

"Why, Tillie, what are you doing here?"

"Who is Tillie?" asked the woman.

"Why, you are Tillie and I'm Dave, and I saw the man chuck you into the river."

At the mention of the name and the river Tillie ~~only~~ gave an excited cry and fled before the boy could prevent her. Dave went on his way and in a short time stood before the old house. It was boarded up as before, but Dave found a loose plank over the cellar opening and pushing it aside he dropped into the cellar and went up the cellar stairs and stepped out into the long hall as the light of a candle suddenly fell upon him.

#### CHAPTER IX.—In the Old House Again.

"Who's that?" asked a sharp voice.

"It's me, missis; it's Dave," said the boy, who recognized the voice of his questioner.

The old woman herself came forward, leaning on her staff, and said:

"So-so, it's the boy come back, my Davy returned to the old house. I'm glad to see you—very glad. So you didn't forget your old mother, did you, Davy?"

"No," said Dave, "but I couldn't get in till to-night, the place was all nailed up."

"Yes, yes, to be sure, to be sure it was. I forgot to leave a plan, but maybe it was just as well. Come upstairs, Davy, I want to talk with you."

The old woman led the way, holding the light above her head so that the boy could see, although this was totally unnecessary, as Dave could have found his way all over the old house in pitch darkness.

"And you've been here all the time, missis?" asked Dave, as he followed the queer old creature up the broad stairway.

"Yes, I've been here. He, he! It was a clever trick. Ha, ha! They thought I'd run away, but I was here all the time. He, he!" and the old woman laughed in a cracked voice, and plodded up the steps, retiring on her staff when she reached the top, and holding the light for Dave.

"Wasn't that kind o' funny?" the latter asked. "You wasn't afraid o' 'em, was you?"

"He, he, he! A clever trick that. I fooled 'em all. But it was wrong to lock you out, Davy—yes, that wa'nt right," and the woman hobble along till she reached the door of her room.

Then she pushed open with her stick, turning her head as she entered to say:

"Come in, Davy—come in, boy. You're safe here and welcome. He, he, he! Yes, yes, I fooled them all. They thought I had run away. They thought I was afraid of them, but I wasn't. No, no! It wasn't them I was afraid of; it was myself."

She reached the chair by the table as she finished, put the candle in the bottle, and sat down.

"Sit down, my boy, take your old seat on the other side," she said. "Ha, ha, it's good to see you there once more. How fine you look. I knew you would. And so you've found good friends, have you, Davy, and you're in business, and there's a young lady who thinks you're a noble boy, and will do anything in the world for you. Aha! my boy, you're in luck, but it's no more than you deserve."

The boy looked at the queer old creature in amazement. How did she know all that had happened when she had not seen him in nearly a month? The woman evidently read the question in his face, for she said:

"Ha, ha! You wonder how I know all that, my boy? Ha! I know a good deal, Davy; a good deal, my boy. Well, well, it was wrong to lock you out, but perhaps it was right after all. I might have been tempted, I might have forgotten my good resolutions."

"What do you mean, missus?" asked Dave, in a frightened whisper. "You wouldn't have let that feller get me, would you?"

"I might have done it, boy—yes, yes, I might, and I was afraid of that. I wasn't sure how strong I was. I might have forgotten, but no, no, sit down, Davy, sit down," for the boy had arisen from his seat.

"You wouldn't do that, would you, missus?"

"No, no, not now, Davy, not now. Sit down; you are safe with me. No one shall harm a hair of your head. I would kill them first!" and the old woman looked so determined that Dave still felt somewhat alarmed.

"That feller didn't come here to find me first off, did he?" he asked presently.

"No, he came on other business. I am a wicked old woman, my boy, a woman who had blood on her hands, innocent blood, but I would die a hundred deaths before I would let any one harm you!"

"I have been bad, Davy. I have plowed against the lives of others, I have robbed and murdered and sworn falsely, these are sins, and sins upon my head enough to bury me deep in the bottomless pit, enough to sink me in perdition forever, but nothing could tempt me now to give you up or to let any harm come to you through me."

"What does any one want to hurt me for? I never done anybody harm."

"No, you have not, but you are rich, you stand in others' light, they will be rich if you are dead, and I could have helped them, but I wouldn't, no, not if all my evil life was forgiven me and I could live in Paradise."

"But I ain't rich, missis," said Dave. "I'm just workin' along, gettin' a livin', and I don't see what any one—"

"No, it's the truth," said the old woman. "You are a rich man's son, I tell you."

"Who is he, missis?"

The old woman shook her head.

"Ha! that's the part of the secret I haven't found out."

"Then you didn't know I was anybody when I came here?"

"Oh, yes, I did, boy, yes, I did. I knew you were a gentleman. I knew you would never lie and steal and cheat and I never tried to make you."

"But you didn't know who I was?"

"Oh, yes, I did, boy, yes, I did. I knew you that you are a rich man's son and that he is alive and that you are in somebody's way."

"What has Cool Dick gotter do with it, missis?" asked Dave, looking fixedly at the old woman.

"He is a bad man, Davy, a dangerous, treacherous villain. Beware of him. Keep your locket and your other treasures safe, boy, never let

them out of your possession. Some day they will be the means of getting you your own again."

"You bet I'll keep 'em, missis, and I ain't afraid of Cool Dick neither. I know something about him that'll fix him if the cops ever catch him!"

"And Tillie," said the woman. "She is still clouded in her mind. She can tell you nothing, Davy, boy."

"Why, how in the dickens did you know that? I haven't seen you for a month, and—"

"Find her, Davy, watch her; some day she may regain her reason."

"Yes, but it's not so easy to find her, missis. What did Cool Dick want to drown her for? Does she know who I am?"

"Yes."

"Did Dick tell you that?"

"I found it out, Davy, I found it out, but you are tired and need rest. Go to sleep; you will find your old room ready. There's a candle on the table. Go to sleep, boy, you need rest!"

"Good-night, missis," said the boy, arising. "I don't believe you're a bad old woman at all. I always told 'em you wasn't, and I always will. I'll try and sleep, but I'm as wide awake as a fox. Good-night."

The old woman said nothing, but sat slowly moving her head to and fro, and Dave went away.

"It's deuced funny," he thought. "I can't make it out at all. Gee! I better go and see Pete. I let he wondered why I didn't meet him last night."

He found the Greens at their breakfast, and Mrs. Green made him sit down and eat while she plied him with numerous questions. He told of his being decoyed, or being drugged, of having heard the men talking about him and his escape, but said nothing about Mother Harpy.

"Well, I'm glad you got away from the villains," said Mrs. Green, "they orter be arrested, and I just hope they will, too, and be sent to jail for life, yes, and longer, the scoundrels!"

Dave finally left the house and went to the store where he did his work as usual, returning to his boarding-house in the evening. His landlady was puzzled to know why he had not been in the night before, but the boy said that he had been detained, and the woman seemed satisfied. After supper he went up to the Wintertons', being admitted by Martin, who seemed surprised to see him, and said:

"Why, Mr. Davil, I thought you was hurt, sir! Our young lady and Mr. Hamilton Wardlake have gone down to the hospital to see you and—"

"Miss Mattie has gone with that feller, Martin?" cried Dave.

"Yes, the young lady was very much disturbed about it, and the gentleman offered to go with her because Mr. Carter was not on hand and—"

The man was talking to the air, for with an angry cry on his lips, Dave had suddenly sped down the steps, muttering to himself:

"It's another put-up job, but if that villain hurts her the least bit I'll kill him!"

## CHAPTER X.—Mattie Winterton's Peril.

In a fairly well furnished room on the second floor of a quiet house, in a secluded neighborhood, Mattie Winterton sat in a disconsolate attitude in a cushioned chair gazing at the floor. Traces of tears were in her eyes, but there was a look of determination in her face which showed that she had by no means lost courage, and that she would meet the worst with true courage. For a long time she sat in silence, and even as the shadows began to lengthen and darkness to gather in the room, she sat motionless, gazing at the floor. A woman presently entered, after having unlocked the door, and said in a constrained voice:

"Can I do anything for you, madam?"

"No," said Mattie, "except to release me from this prison."

"Oh, but you know that I can't do that, ma'am. The master would not allow it."

"Your master, perhaps, but not mine," said the brave girl. "I demand to be set free, and you can tell him for me that the longer he keeps me here, the greater danger he is in from the law."

"But I'm sure he would love you, and treat you like a lady if you would only—"

Mattie made an impatient gesture, and said shortly:

"You have said quite enough. I have given this scoundrel an answer, and shall not change it. You need not remain."

"All right, ma'am," said the woman, not at all abashed. "Shall I light the lamp? It will be dark here soon, and—"

"You can do as you please," said Mattie, coldly. "I have no interest whatever in your household affairs."

The woman locked the door, put the key in her pocket and began to bustle about, dusting here, changing the arrangements of ornaments or furniture there, evidently expecting that the prisoner would talk, and being most anxious to hear her. She finally seemed to desist of accomplishing this, and striking a match, lighted a large lamp standing upon a table in the center of the apartment.

Mattie said nothing, and the woman, finding her so unresponsive, took the key from her pocket and unlocked the door.

"The gentleman will call this evening, I expect," she said, standing in the doorway. "You will see him, won't you?"

"If I am obliged to—yes!"

"But don't you think you'd better give him the answer he wants, and—"

"Go!" said Mattie, rising imperiously and beckoning toward the door with a sweep of her arm. "I did not expect insults from a woman. If you are in the pay of this scoundrel you will not better your position by your interference. Go!"

The woman retired abashed, locking the door on the outside.

"To think that I should be subjected to this outrage, to this degradation," said the prisoner, bitterly, pacing the room like a caged animal. "Oh, why did I not see through this transparent plot? Why did I not run on the plain out? Why

didn't my carnation sense tell me that it was but a subterfuge to ensnare me?"

She paced up and down restlessly, now and again giving utterance to her thoughts, bitter or hopeful, as her mood changed.

"Somebody will discover the cheat, David himself may go to the house, I will be followed, I shall not be long a prisoner here, but—no, no, they will be unable to discover me, and this scoundrel will— Oh, it is horrible, I will not think of it!"

By degrees she grew calmer, and at last resumed her seat, sitting silent and motionless gazing out at the darkness, but with her mind away. It was after nine o'clock when a step was heard in the hall outside, the key was turned in the lock, the door opened and Hamilton Wardrake entered, faultlessly dressed, an evil smile upon his face, and every movement indicating the animal, the cruel, unrepenting beast of prey.

"Well," he said in his softest tones and oiliest smile, "have you come to a determination, my dear Miss—"

"You can spare me your disgusting endearments, sir," interrupted Mattie. "You already know my mind. I have not altered my determination."

"Nor I mind," said the other, still smiling. "I have determined that you shall be my wife."

"And I have determined the exact reverse."

"It's useless for you to try to entrap me in this," said Wardrake. "This place is unknown to your friend, I can keep you as long as I please, every one in the house is in my pay and I'll do my bidding unhesitatingly, so you see that you are completely in my power."

"And so you call this love?" demanded the girl, scornfully.

"No. I call it diplomacy, but love will follow, never fear. A woman always admires the man who can conquer her."

"Some miserable creatures, who call themselves men, may do so," returned Mattie, with the most ineffable scorn, "but I am not of that sort. Leave me, sir! I have nothing further to say!"

"But I have this to say!" he declared, with a savage imprecation, striding angrily toward her, "you shall be my wife."

At that instant Mattie looked toward the window, and stood suddenly still as if rooted to the spot.

Outside stood Shiner looking into the room. The boy remembered the house on Nineteenth street before which he had escaped from the carriage in which Bill and Cool Dick were abducting him, and he thought possibly Mattie had been taken there. So he changed his clothes for old ones and went there. Seeing a light in the second story, he climbed up on the porch roof and looked in one of the windows. Then he saw what was taking place between Mattie and Cool Dick, or Mrs. Wardrake, which he now knew to be one and the same party. When he saw Wardrake make a move toward Mattie, Dave shattered the lower pane of glass, put his hand in and unlocked the window and sprang into the room. Mattie saw who it was.

"Shiner! Thank God!" she exclaimed.

Dave hauled himself up on the villain and dashed him to the floor.

"Don't you get up!" the boy cried, "or I'll fill

you full of holes. I know you, Mr. Cool Dick, Mr. Baxter Hampton and Mr. Hamilton Wardrake, and if I hear of any more nonsense out of you I'll give you away to the cops."

"Open the door, Mattie, and let us get out of here," cried Dave.

Mattie threw open the door. As Wardrake tried to get on his feet Dave picked up a chair and crashed it down on his head, felling him. Then Dave took Mattie by the hand and led her out of the room, locking the door behind them from the outside.

## CHAPTER XI.—COOL DICK STILL AT WORK.

"David, my boy, you have done us all a service that I can never repay. Ask any favor of me and it shall be granted."

"I don't want anything, sir, indeed I don't. I'd have done twice as much for Miss Mattie."

"But, my boy, you must allow me to repay you in some manner for what you have done."

"I'm paid already, sir, now that Miss Mattie is all right. That's enough."

"But I wish to do something to show my gratitude, my boy. You must let me make some return."

"You want to do something for me real bad?"

"Yes. Tell me what you would like best of all, and you shall have it."

"Then I wish you could find Tillie and cure her of being crazy."

"It shall be done; but that is not for yourself, David."

"Oh, that's all right, sir."

"No, it is not."

"Well, then, I tell you what, sir. Give Pete Green a job in the store."

"He shall have it, but you haven't asked for anything for yourself."

"Well, I know, but—"

"Wouldn't you really like something on your own account, David?" asked Mattie, who was present at the interview between Shiner and her father.

The boy had succeeded in making his escape from the house and had taken the young lady home, where Mr. Winterton was informed of all that had happened.

"I donno as I would, Miss Mattie," answered the boy, in reply to Mattie's question, unless—"

"Yes, unless what, David? It can't be too much, I know. What is it?"

"Well, I'd like to know more'n I do. I can scarcely read, and I can't write a bit, and as for figures—well, I ain't in it, that's all."

"You shall go to school at once," said the merchant.

"Yes, but I'd like to stay in the store too, 'cause then I can see Mr. Carstone and be helping him along. He's a good boy, he is, but he's slow, and if he don't have somebody to brace him up he'll get rattled and think everybody's making fun of him."

"You shall go to school, and you shall stay in the store also."

"Then that's settled, and I'm not old yet."

"But I do feel old, and I'm not young."

"I do too, and I'm not young, and I'm not

good to me, and she knows who I am, and I'd like to find out, 'cause—well, 'cause—"

"Yes?"

"'Cause I'd like to be somebody. Now I ain't nobody, only just Shiner, the bootblack."

"But where is this woman?"

"I donno, sir. Sometimes she's one place and sometimes another. That feller Dick or Wardrake wanted to kill her, I don't know why."

"It was very clever in you to have seen through the scoundrel's disguise, my boy. I would never have done it. I had no idea that he was such a villain."

"Well, he didn't know I was listenin' or I don't s'pose he'd have given himself away like he did."

"Well, we are well rid of him at all events. He will never call here again, and if he remains in the city he is liable to arrest."

"Oh, he'll skip; but he's a bad one, Mr. Winterton, and you want to watch out for him. He'll try some of his games some other time, you see."

"So we will, my boy," laughed the merchant, "but if he does I think we can depend on you to outwit him as you did this time."

"Well, I ain't afraid of him, or not as much as I was, anyhow."

Mr. Winterton did all that he had promised, or as much as was possible, for Pete was given a place in the store, Dave received lessons every afternoon and evening, and search was made for Tillie. The latter task proved unavailing, however, for the woman could not be found, although she was advertised for in all the city papers and in many out of town. Cool Dick, the man of many aliases, disappeared at once, and Mr. Charley Dawson, the bareback rider, also failed to put in an appearance, the police searching diligently for both worthies.

It was several days after the rescue of Mattie Winterton when Dave, getting away early from his lessons, rode downtown to see Mother Harpy. The place was deserted, apparently, but Dave did not mean to go away without having made an effort to see the woman, and he therefore knocked softly upon the boarded up lower door. At first there was no answer, and the knock was repeated. Still Dave heard nothing, and he was about to knock again, when a voice at his elbow said:

"So, so, my boy. You want to see me, do you?"

He turned and saw the old woman standing against the wall, but whether she had come or how he was at a loss to tell.

"Yes'm, I do," he said.

"Come in," muttered the old woman, pushing aside a board or two, and revealing a narrow opening, leading the way, after restoring the boards to their original position when inside. They had hardly entered, when a man came out of the shadow of the doorway opposite, and hurriedly followed, muttering savagely:

"Ha! I thought he would come to see the old woman at last. Now, my young friend, I will make sure of you this time, and put you beyond any one's power to ever solve the secret of your life."

The man was Cool Dick, Shiner's sworn enemy.

## CHAPTER XII.—The Secret Is Almost Told.

Reaching the old house after Dave and the old woman had entered, Mr. Baxter Hampton, otherwise Cool Dick, paused and looked around him. He was disguised by a heavy beard and mustaches, a suit of rough clothes, a slouched hat, and heavy boots, and looked like a sailor just home from a long voyage.

"How did they get in?" he muttered. "The place seems locked and barred on all sides, but I know they went in, and I must do the same."

He made his way cautiously along the wall, feeling the boards, trying the doors gently, and examining every corner where he imagined there might be a door concealed.

"The boy must be got rid of," he continued. "Come what may he must not inherit his father's millions. If it were only for revenge now, I would cheat him out of his inheritance, but I shall not fail a second time in carrying out my plan of becoming the husband of Mattie Winterton."

"Confound that old hag! How did she get in? I'll swear that I saw her enter the place, and so must I if I have to tear it to pieces. There does not seem to be the slightest means of entering, and yet—well, what does it matter? I can destroy them as well by remaining outside as I can by forcing an entrance."

"The place is old and half decayed, the boards are rotten and will burn like punk. A fire once started will be impossible to put out. Yes, I'll do it and rid myself at one blow of two of my enemies!"

He hurriedly recrossed the street, and disappeared in the doorway whence he had emerged, carrying something under his arm. It was a small iron bar, and with it he pried off several boards near the ground, being careful to make as little noise as possible. Having made an opening a few inches high and two or three feet in length, he dug away the plaster and laths for a short space till he had made an opening as large as his two palms. He then took from his side pocket a quantity of tow which he stuffed into the opening of the inner wall, also dropping considerable of the same between the laths and the clay-boards. Then with a small can of oil or turpentine which he had set upon the ground, he reached in and saturated the tow, sprinkling the fluid also over the boards inside and out. All this time he had been in the shadow and was unobserved, there being no one passing in the street at this time.

"Now then, to fire the place and get rid of two of my foes, the rest to follow, all in good time!" he hissed.

Striking a match between the outer and inner walls so that its light might not betray him, he touched it to the saturated tow and then dropped it upon that beneath. In an instant the combustible material was all ablaze.

Dropping the can into the flames below, the man hurriedly closed the gap he had made, so that the fire might be confined to the walls and the interior, and not show itself on the outside until the warning would be too late. Then, with a triumphant chuckle and an angry exclamation, he quickly left the place, muttering away.

"There! In a few minutes they will be beyond escape, and a part of my plans will have succeeded."

"This way, Davy, my boy, this way. I've something to tell you that you'll be surprised to hear. Oh, yes, I know how to be good to those I love, wicked as I am," chattered the old woman, as she led the way to the floor above.

"Yes'm," said Dave, who fancied that his guide was still laboring under some insane delusion.

Reaching the door, she pushed it open and said:

"Go in, Davy, boy, go in, and see what you will see; ha, ha! you didn't expect it, I know you didn't, but I'm a wiser old woman than you think, and I know that you—he—he—he—yes, I know what you would—"

"Why, it's Tillie!" cried Dave suddenly, as a figure arose upon his entrance.

Hurrying toward her, he seized the woman's hand and asked eagerly:

"Don't you know me, Tillie? It's me, Dave—little Dave of the circus. You were good to me once, and now I want—"

"Davy, yes, yes, little Davy, I remember now," said the woman, in whose face there was more expression than when the boy had last seen it. "Yes, you are the boy Davy, and I am the Mademoiselle Clotilde, premiere equestrienne of the circus," and she smiled. "Once I was young and pretty, Davy, but now—ah, now I am—"

"You're as pretty as you always was, Tillie," interrupted the boy, "and I know you're just as good. I've been wanting to see you a long time—ever since that night that—"

The old woman was suddenly seized with a violent fit of coughing, and as Dave turned to look at her, she gave him a quick signal.

"Gee! I 'most forgot!" he murmured. "Guess I mustn't say anything about that!"

"You wanted to see me, Davy?" asked the former equestrienne, sitting down. "How did you know that I was still alive? It is many years since I saw you, many long, cruel years, which have made me old and ugly, and—ha! that life was a living hell, a continual torment, a—"

A strange look came into the equestrienne's eyes, and the old woman suddenly sprang to her side and put her hands upon Tillie's shoulders.

"Here is Davy, our little Davy, come to see you, my dear," she said, soothingly. "You remember Davy? You know what a pretty fellow he was? He is older now, but see what a splendid boy he is!"

"Why, yes. I remember Davy," said Tillie, whose face had grown suddenly calm again. "Well, well, so this is Davy, the child wonder of the circus. Do you ride a horse now, my boy?"

"Sometimes," said Dave, sitting beside the woman, "but I don't get much chance these days. You remember me when I was a little fellow, don't you? Didn't use to tell you stories, things what had happened to me, I mean, all about my father and mother, and where I used to live; you remember all that, don't you?"

"About your father and mother, Davy? You used to tell me about them?" and the woman's brow clouded. "You used to tell me stories."

"Why, yes, didn't I? I can't remember, but

I thought maybe you would. Don't you remember what I told you?" and the boy looked appealingly into his old friend's eyes.

"You do remember, don't you, dear?" asked the old woman. "You know you said you remembered all about him? You'll tell him, won't you? Davy's a good boy, you know, and you used to like him so much."

"Yes, yes, poor little fellow, and they abuse him so; they are so cruel to him; it is a shame to treat the poor baby so harshly," muttered Tillie, her memory evidently reverting to the old days, and speaking as if that time were the present. "It is a miserable shame, and if his father only knew it I know he would—"

"Yes, my dear, he would not suffer it. He is a good, kind man and—what did you say his name was, my dear?"

"His name?" repeated Tillie. "Why, yes. Davy told me all that when he came here. Dawson bought him, you know, of gypsies, who had stolen or bought him from some one else, and his name was—"

There came a sudden dull explosion, and the room began to fill rapidly with stifling smoke. The old woman ran to the door and threw it open.

"God save us!" she shrieked. "The place is one mass of flame."

All three were terribly frightened. But the old woman exclaimed:

"Come with me. There is a secret way out that I know of."

Then she threw open a panel in the corner that Davy had never known of.

"Follow me," said Mother Harpy, and she led them down a narrow flight of stairs into the cellar. When they opened a door at the bottom a wall of flame was before them. The old woman darted ahead and Dave turned to take hold of Tillie's hand when he found she was not behind them. He went back a few steps when he was met by a burst of flame right before him. He fell down to the bottom of the stairs to be met by a fireman who had entered the cellar and also by a stream of water from a fire engine outside. Dave now rushed out of the cellar and into a crowd on the sidewalk. He felt a hand laid on his shoulder and turned to come face to face with Peter Green.

"What are you doing here?" asked Peter.

Dave told him his experiences and asked him if he saw either the old woman or Tillie come out of the house. Pete said no one had come out, to his knowledge. Dave was downcast. The boys watched the fire until there was little left of the old house, and then Dave went home with Pete. A week passed and nothing was heard of Mother Harper or Tillie. One day Dave visited the Wintertons when the subject of his early life came to be discussed. Dave told them that Dawson said he got him from the gypsies, but they had stolen him from somebody else.

"But have you nothing you wore when you were a baby?" asked Mr. Winterton.

Then Dave told them of the shirt and the locket and chain that he could not open. Mr. Winterton told Dave to bring them with him the next time he came up to town. The old man told Dave he had a son who was stolen when very young and it would be very strange if

Dave turned out to be that child. Dave thought how happy he would be if it was so. The merchant said the child had a locket which held the picture of himself and his wife. When Dave reached home that night his landlady met him on the stairs.

"You got your blacking box, I suppose?" she asked.

"What do you mean?" asked Dave.

"Why, a gentleman called with a note from you telling me to give him your blacking box, and I gave it to him as the note requested."

"Then the locket is gone," gasped Dave, "and I shall never learn the truth."

### CHAPTER XIII.—Shiner Finds an Ally.

For a few minutes Dave was so overwhelmed by his loss that he couldn't collect his thoughts, his brain being in a whirl. Then he obtained more command of himself and began to question the woman more closely. A gentleman had called during the evening, she said, with a note signed by Dave, which authorized her to deliver a certain package in his room to the bearer. The stranger told her that it was a blacking box and the note mentioned the same article. She had delivered the box, the stranger had taken it away, and that was all she knew about it.

"And the very thing I prized most in all the world was in that box," said Dave, "and this fellow knew it. Wait a moment. What did he look like, how was he dressed?"

"He was dressed pretty nice," said the woman, "—I carried a cane with a gold head. He had a black mustache and side whiskers and looked quite like a gentleman."

"He didn't tell you his name?"

"No, and I didn't ask him for it because the note seemed to be all right."

"Oh, yes, have you the note?"

"Yes."

"Will you let me see it?"

"Why, of course. I'm sorry if it isn't all right, but it seemed so, and he was such a soft-spoken gentleman, and—"

"It's all just as I supposed," cried Dave. "I have the note."

The woman procured the note from her room and handed it over carefully.

"In the first place, I can't write as well as you," she said, musingly, "and in the next, if I told anybody after anything I would say what I was. The whole thing was a plot."

The fellow knew what I had in the box and much I prized it and he meant to steal it. He was my father, and he knows that this is the solution. I am more and more certain that I do. I know it, and that's all."

"There's only money in the box, Mr. Dawson?"

"No," said Dave, putting the note in his pocket, and hurrying to his room.

When he walked up and down, turning everything over in his mind till he came to one conclusion.

"It was Bill who set fire to the old house,

it was he who wanted to have me thrown in the river, it was he who wished to marry Mattie, it was he who sought to kill Tillie, and for what?

"I am the son of Stephen Winterton and he knows it, Tillie knows it and he sought to kill her. If he could put me out of the way and marry Mattie all of Mr. Winterton's fortune would go to him.

"That's it, and it's as clear as day. Now that he can't marry Mattie he is spiteful enough to cheat me out of my inheritance by stealing the very proof we want. It was a bold stroke, but we may get ahead of Mr. Baxter Hampton yet.

"I don't care so much for the fortune, but I love that locket. I prize it more than anything I have, and to lose it through that scoundrel is more than I can bear."

There was clearly nothing to be done at that time, however, and Dave soon went to bed, although he did not fall asleep for more than an hour, so busy were his thoughts over the affair.

In the morning he started for Mr. Winterton's directly after breakfast, in order to tell his benefactor about the loss of the locket. In turning into Sixth avenue his arm was suddenly seized by a flashily-dressed man, who said gruffly:

"H'm, you are Dave Whittley, the boy wonder of the circus, and I want you."

"Let go my arm, Charley Dawson," said the boy. "I do not intend to let you capture me as you did before, and if you try to make any trouble I'll call a policeman."

"So you know me, do you?" he said. "I thought you'd say you didn't."

"Yes, I know you, and I know what you wanted to do with me, but you won't get me into your circus and make a fortune out of me if I know it."

"Say, Dave, let's talk business," said the man in a gentler tone, releasing the boy's arm. "Bill Pidgeon went back on me that time, but now I'll do the square thing by you. Come into some quiet place and let's talk it over."

"What do you want to do?"

"Go into the circus business with me. I'll give you two hundred a week and a share of the profits—twenty-five per cent. That's straight, ain't it? A month's training will get you back into the thing again, and you'll be better than you—"

"I am not going back to the circus," said Dave firmly, "so there's no use making me any terms, Mr. Dawson."

"You'll never get such another chance to make money, Dave. Come, think it over. I'll give you two or three days to make up your mind."

"My mind is already made up," said Dave. "What was that you called me just now—Dave Whitney?"

"No, Whittley. That's the name the man gave you that let me have you."

"Was he my father?" asked Dave, trying not to show too much interest.

"I don't know. He did tell me he was."

"But he was a gypsy, and gypsies don't tell their own children."

"I don't know anything about that. Maybe he wasn't your father at all. Didn't you know yourself whether he was or not?"

"How could I, when I was so young?"

"That's so; you was only three years old when I took you."

"That's something to know," thought the boy. "Perhaps I may learn more. No, I don't remember him at all," he said in reply to the circus man.

"Well, then, I shouldn't wonder if you'd been kidnapped when you was a baby. I never ask questions when I take youngsters to train to the business."

"If you could find out who my father was, I might make it worth your while to furnish me with the information," said Dave, quietly. "I am really anxious to know."

"And you won't go back to the circus?"

"No, and you needn't tell Bill Pidgeon to kidnap me again either."

"I'll smash his head first," said Dawson, angrily. "H'm! I've got it! He's working for Hawley Furguson, that's what he is. I remember now. Hawley married Tillie Swift, the bareback rider, and—"

"Was Tillie married?" asked Dave, in surprise.

"Yes, she married Hawley and left the show a year or so after you skipped. Big fool, too, she was. He just spent her money, Dick did, and abused her, the—"

"Did you say Dick? Good heavens, you don't mean Cool Dick?"

"That's the feller, and I reckon he had more names than that."

"He has. Cool Dick was the man that Bill Pidgeon made the deal with when I was drugged and taken from the—"

"Oh, he was, eh? H'm! Then he's the man that knows who your father is. Tillie told him. She wouldn't tell me, but she said there was a mystery about you. By heaven, Dave, I'll hunt down that villain and worm his secret out of him, if I have to kill him, just to get square on him for the mean trick he played me! Yes, sir, and I'll do it for nothing."

"Then Whittley knew who I really was?"

"I reckon he did."

"Where is he now?"

"I don't like to say, but, anyhow, you won't find him, for he's been dead these last five years."

I thought it was as well not to give him an address."

"You were quite right. Well, let us hope that it will come to something."

Two days later the following notice appeared in the personal column of the Herald:

"Will D meet D same place, noon?"

Dave saw the notice and telephoned from the store to Mr. Winterton to learn what the latter advised.

"Be there promptly at noon," answered the merchant, and Dave kept the appointment.

At exactly noon he was at the spot where he had met the circus man. A moment later Dawson came out of a saloon not far away.

"Well?" asked Dave.

"What will you give me if I tell you who your father is?" asked Dawson.

"I have nothing to give, I am only a poor boy earning my own living."

"But you have friends. Perhaps Mr. Winterton— Some of your friends would be glad to help you learn the truth."

"The other day you said you would do this for nothing."

"Well, you see, there's more in it than I thought there was. I've got the proofs now, and I'll sell 'em to you for—well, what do you think they are worth?"

"Nothing whatever," said Dave. "You have no proofs."

Dawson colored angrily, and said:

"Oh, you can't bluff me. I've got the proofs. I tell you, and if Mr. Winterton— If you want 'em you've got to pay for them."

"If you haven't any more to say than that, you might have saved yourself the trouble of coming up here," said Dave. "I can't waste any more time on you, if you—"

"Now, say, look here, Dave!" said Dawson, in a confidential tone, "I don't mind telling you that you're the son of old Winterton, but you've got to prove it, or you won't get a penny of his money. His relations will dispute the will, and you'll get left—see?"

"Well?"

"Ain't it worth something to prove yourself heir to millions? Well, I guess! What do you say to fifty thousand?"

"I haven't the money."

"No, but your father has. You just ask him. It's like chucking your chances away to refuse an offer like that. Just say the word, and I'll go with you now, prove what I say, and get the money."

"I shall do nothing of the sort. You must treat directly with Mr. Winterton."

"But I tell you, Davy, my boy," and Dawson took hold of the boy's arm and looked more and more confidential, "I tell you that I can put you into the best thing a boy ever struck. You ought to think enough of an old friend to pay him for that, I should think."

Dave's eyes flashed and the color rose to his temples as he replied:

"You're no friend of mine, Charley Dawson, nor am I the easy, trusting boy I was. My life has hardened me and I know whom I trust. You are trying a game of blackmail, but you won't

#### CHAPTER XIV.—The Ally Proves a Traitor.

A day or so after Dave again appeared at the Winterton residence.

Mr. Winterton was waiting for Dave in the library, and when the boy came in he said:

"Well, you have brought the locket?"

"No, sir," and Dave told how he had lost the locket and of the meeting with Dawson.

"You seem to have pitted one scoundrel against another, Dave," said the merchant, "but when rogues fall out, honest men get their dues, you know."

"If Dawson can get the locket back, I shall be satisfied, sir."

"But I shall not be. I wish to see you righted, my boy, and I shall do all in my power to accomplish it. Did you give the man your address, in case he wished to communicate with you?"

"I told him to put a personal in the Herald.

play 't out. The other day you were telling the truth; to-day you are lying! I have no more to say."

"But I have!" hissed Dawson, making a sudden movement toward his hip pocket.

As quick as lightning Dave's fist shot out and took him in the mouth. He uttered a cry of rage and a slung-shot fell from his hand to the pavement. There were few persons in the neighborhood at that time, and Dave did not care to risk an encounter at short range with the scoundrel. He therefore quickly left the place, and Dawson hurried away as quickly in another direction.

"He doesn't know a thing more than he knew the other day," mused Dave, "but he thinks he can humbug me and make Mr. Winterton pay a large sum of money for nothing."

If Dave had finished with the man there was another who had not. This was a boy of about Dave's own age, who, in the garb of an ordinary street urchin, followed the circus man when he hurried away. He had been standing in a doorway while Dave and Dawson were talking, and had been entirely unobserved by them, which was precisely what he wished. The boy was Pete, and he had been sent to act as a spy upon Dawson, unknown to Dave, by Mr. Winterton. The latter suspected that the circus man had some scheme on hand, and he determined to discover what it was, if possible. Without saying anything to Dave about it, he sent for Peter, whom he knew not only to be a friend of Dave's, but a shrewd fellow as well. The matter of a disguise was easily enough arranged, and then Mr. Winterton told the boy to be present at the interview without being seen, and to follow Dawson afterwards and discover all he could about him.

Neither Dave nor Dawson noticed the boy following the circus man, and Pete kept at a sufficient distance behind not to arouse suspicion. Dawson slackened his speed considerably after he had passed two or three side streets, and his shadow had no difficulty whatever in following him. The man went into one or two saloons and Pete waited outside till he came out. Finally he boarded a surface car and rode downtown, standing on the front platform smoking a cigar, Pete taking the rear end. When in the neighborhood of Eighth street, the man left the car and Pete followed him to a saloon in front of which he met a man to whom he said:

"Tain't no use, Bill. We'll have to work the thing in partnership with Dick."

"You saw Shiner?"

"Yes, and he tumbled right away. He knows I can't tell him anyway."

"Well, he's too smart; but I tell you what, let's kidnap him and make Dick pay for him."

"We'll make more money by holding him for a ransom and making old Winterton come down handsome before we give up his dearly beloved son."

"Good! Let's have a drink on it."

bar-room. Peter came in a moment afterwards and asked the bartender for a glass of water. Then he walked over to where the two men were sitting and asked:

"Want any matches or lead pencils, gents?"

"Naw!" growled Bill Pidgeon.

"Don't you want a shine then? I'll get me box."

"Naw, we don't want a shine; get out!"

"All right," and Peter took a seat at a table between the men and the door. Bill changed his seat so as to bring him closer to Dawson, and the backs of the two men were then turned toward Peter. The boy yawned, stretched his arms and finally rested them on the table.

"Let me sleep a little, will you, boss?" he asked the barkeeper, who was then serving Dawson and Bill Pidgeon.

"Certainly; only if the place fills up you'll have to skip."

"All right, boss," and Pete bowed his head upon his hands and was soon snoring gently.

"The way to do it is just this, Charley," said Pidgeon, setting down his glass. "No decoy business'll work, 'cause we tried that before, and the young feller'll tumble. What we want to do is to collar him when he's coming home some night."

"That's it, and that's easy. He goes to see the old man almost every night. You know where he lives."

"Of course; and, anyhow, he can be followed, can't he? We'll be waiting with a cab, chuck him in it, and take him to your place on Grand street, and then write to the old man."

"Yes, but if you go in with Hawley Furquin again like you did before, I'll walk on your neck. You can't do me more'n once, Bill."

"Well, Dick offered me a good price, and—"

"And you done me up and then let the boy get away after all. If you try it again, Bill, you'll get full o' lead that you'll be able to sell yourself at a junk shop."

"All right, Charlie," laughed Bill.

"You bet it's all right," said Dawson, fiercely. "I mean business this time, Bill Pidgeon, and don't you forget it!"

"That's all right, Charley," said Bill, uneasily. "I'm on the square in this. How much are you going to strike the old man for?"

"It ought to be worth a hundred thousand to us, Bill. The old man is rich and he won't let no harm come to the boy. I can work it up, threaten the boy's life and all that, and get him so wild that he'll come down handsome."

"Yes, and then collar us both when we go for the money!"

"Ah, what are you giving us?" sneered Dawson. "I ain't no chump. I can work this thing right. First we nab him—see?"

"Yes."

"Then we don't take him to Grand street at all, but to a place in Eighth street, down the west side, between the Avenue of the Americas and Madison street, and there we'll lay in, and the old man jolts up."

"All right."

"Then we make the old feller come alone, with the money in bills, to the place at midnight, and when we get it the boy'll be sent away."

## CHAPTER XV.—A Dangerous Plot Overheard.

Dawson and Bill Pidgeon went into the saloon and took a seat at a table in one corner of the

"But will he give up the sugar without seeing the boy?"

"He's gotter. I ain't going to have no check business. We'll take the boy there if he likes, but if he doesn't come alone or pony up, we'll put a bullet through the boy's head and settle the whole business."

"But, ain't you asking a pretty steep price, Charley?"

"No. Ain't he worth millions and won't he give that much for his son's life?"

"Then you're sure he's the old man's son?"

"Certainly, and what's the matter with making him think so?"

"Maybe he won't swaller it."

"Then all we've gotter do is to bring Dick in and get the proofs. Dick knows and so does Tillie, but nobody knows where Tillie is now."

"Then we'll have to whack up with Dick and how much 'll I got?"

"You'll get as much as any of us, o' course. Have another snifter?"

"Don't care if I do."

The bartender was summoned, and as he brought a bottle and glasses, he said to Pete:

"Say, young feller, this ain't no lodging-house. You'll have to skip. Ain't you had snooze enough?"

Pete made no reply and the man shook him roughly.

"What's the matter?" asked Pete, arousing himself with evident difficulty. "I ain't been asleep, have I, boss?"

"Yes, you have, and you better take a sneak. I didn't tell you you could sleep here all day."

"All right, boss, much obliged, I'll do the same for you some day," and Pete arose, stretched his arms and left the place in the slouching manner usual with sleepy boys.

"Well! Those two fellers are the worst I ever seen," he muttered, when in the street. "Goin' to scoop in Shiner and make the old man duff up, are they? They've got a noive, they have!"

"And Shiner is the old man's son, is he? Well, that beats the woild. Who'd have thought of it. Why, he'll be a regular dude, he will, but he ain't the sort to go back on a chum, he ain't, no matter how rich he is."

The boy knew that there was no use trying to learn any more of the plot against Dave, but he had already discovered enough to give Dave's friends the advantage of the game, and satisfied with the result of his mission he hurried off to change his clothes and tell Mr. Winterton all he had learned, muttering as he sped away:

"I'm Shiner up if the old man don't come down, will they? Well, I guess not, not on their life!"

#### CHAPTER XVI.—Cool Dick in Desperate Straits.

For several days nothing was seen of Dawson, Bill Pidgeon, or Dick and although Dave went to Mr. Winterton's house nearly every night no attempt was made to kidnap him. Police and were always ready to catch him, and the boy himself was in great fear, but the villain had evidently given up the plot, or had become alarmed, and meant to put it off to a more convenient time. Two weeks had passed since Peter Green had

overheard the plot against Dave, and nothing had been done, nor had it been possible to find any of the scoundrels connected with the affair. Dave did not relax his vigilance, however, because he had an idea that Dawson was only waiting for an unguarded moment to carry out his plans. He did not go to Mr. Winterton's every night, but always having occasion to do so, and thinking also that Dawson might suspect that he was doing so purposely in order to entrap him.

He could not tell if he had been watched, never having seen any signs of his enemies, but such might be the case for all that. One evening, as he was sitting in his room, engaged on some problems that Mattie had given him, the landlady brought him a despatch from Mr. Winterton, which ran as follows:

"Come at once. Important communications.

"Steven Winterton."

The boy looked the telegram over as he held it in his hand and mused.

"I wonder if it is a plot," he thought, "or whether Mr. Winterton really wants to see me. I don't know what to think. Perhaps I had better go. I have my revolver in case I am attacked, and if I stay away, Mr. Winterton may be offended."

"It isn't any bad news, is it, Mr. David?" asked the woman, interrupting the boy's thoughts.

"Oh, no, only I thought that you might have heard bad news, you looked so sober."

"No, only, by the way, you didn't sign for this, did you? The boy must be waiting. I'll run down and—"

"Oh, I signed the boy's book," said the other, quickly. "I wasn't sure that you were in. It isn't anything bad, is it?"

The woman was evidently dying of curiosity to know what was in the despatch, but the boy did not gratify her.

"No, it's all right, but I think I'll go out," he said, getting up.

Going to the nearest drug store he called up Mr. Winterton on the telephone, as he knew that the merchant had an instrument in his house.

"Did you telegraph for me just now, sir?" he asked.

"Yes; I want to see you."

"All right. I had an idea that the message was sent by some one else. I did not see the boy."

"Yes, it's all right. We have learned something of importance."

"I will come at once."

"Do so. It would take too much time to tell it to you over the wire."

"I will come at once. Good-by!"

Hurrying from the drug store, the boy took the quickest route to Mr. Winterton's, and in a short time was hurrying along Fifty-seventh street towards the avenue. He was within a few doors of the corner when a man suddenly sprang up from the lowest step of a stoop where he was shaded by the heavy railing, and cried:

"Throw up your hands, or I'll fill you full—"

"No, you don't!" cried the boy, whipping out his own weapon as quick as a flash. "Throw up your hands, Mr. Cool Dick, or I'll riddle—"

There was a sudden rush, and the boy went backward. Crack—crack! He fired two shots

as he fell, but he could not tell if they had had any effect or not. They would certainly be heard, however, but the boy cried out as well to attract attention. Dick was upon him, however, one hand upon his throat and the other over his mouth.

"Curse you! I'll see if you get away this time!" hissed the man, tightening his grasp. "If I can't get away with you in one way I will in another."

Dave felt his breath growing shorter, the blood rushing to his head, and his eyes starting from their sockets. With a last effort he kicked out vigorously with his right foot, and struck as hard a blow as he could with his left hand. The kick took the villain in the stomach, and he fell upon Dave with a gasp of pain.

"Confound you, I'll—"

"Help—help!" and as Dave shouted he struck out with both hands and feet, trying at the same time to recover his weapon, which had fallen upon the pavement.

A shrill whistle was suddenly heard, followed by the sound of hurrying footsteps. A blow from Dave's right foot had struck Dick in the face, throwing him backwards. Both combatants sprang to their feet at the same instant. With an angry growl, Dick started to run down Fifty-seventh street.

"Stop him!" cried Dave.

His foot struck his revolver, and in an instant he stooped and picked it up.

"What's the trouble?" asked a policeman, hurrying up.

"Stop!" cried Dave, hurrying after the fleeing villain.

Dick ran only the faster, for help was coming in all directions to the plucky boy. Presently the man passed a street lamp, which threw a strong light upon him. At that instant Shiner fired. Crack! There was a cry of pain, and Dick staggered, ran a few feet and then fell heavily to the walk. The boy had fired not to kill, but to wound the scoundrel, and the shot had been very effective. Dick was struck in the shoulder, the shock depriving him of all strength for the moment. Before he could get upon his feet again Dave was at his side.

"Lie still or I'll put a bullet in you!" he said, sternly. "Hallo, this way, men. I've got a fellow here that you've been looking for for a long time."

Two policemen quickly came up, and with them came Mr. Winterton, Harold Carstone and the stolid Martin.

"Cool Dick, hey?" said one of the officers, turning the man's face to the light. "Did you kill him?"

"No; he's all right—he's only shamming or he may have fainted."

"How did it all happen, Dave?" asked Mr. Winterton.

"I'll tell you soon, sir. Call the ambulance, if necessary. I charge this man with an attempt to kill."

"I'm afraid you've killed him, Dave," said the merchant.

"... no, sir," and the boy put his hand inside Dick's waistcoat to feel of his heart.

Something hard pressed against his fingers and he felt it over, suddenly crying:

"I've got it! Here's my locket; now we shall learn the truth at last!"

In a moment he had torn away the lining of the man's vest and had brought out the prized locket. Immediately after Dick recovered his senses, for he had indeed fainted. He sprang to his feet and essayed to escape, but fell into the arms of one of the officers.

"Take him to the hospital," said Dave. "It will be time enough later on to make a charge."

## CHAPTER XVII.—Conclusion.

"I have sent for you, my boy," said Mr. Winterton, when he and Dave were in the library, "because I believe that we are now about to solve the mystery of your parentage."

"I have recovered the locket, sir," answered Dave, "and that may tell us something."

Carstone had just entered, and, sitting down, he said:

"You remember the fire at the old house, do you not, Dave?"

"Yes, sir. That's when Tillie and the old woman were burned up."

"No, they were not burned, but Tillie was badly injured and had to be taken to the hospital."

"And she got well?" cried the boy, excitedly.

"Yes, owing to the excellent nursing given to her by Mrs. Wilson, who devoted herself—"

"Mrs. Wilson?" asked Dave in surprise.

"Certainly. Oh, yes, I remember you don't know her by that name," and Carstone smiled.

"You don't mean the old woman, do you?"

"Yes. Her name is Harriet Wilson, and I believe that she has given up forever the name of Mother Harpy."

"She never wanted me to call her that," said Dave, "and since I have learned the meaning of the word I have not cared to use it. Harpies are most unpleasant creatures."

"The woman has greatly changed, and when I saw her in the hospital I hardly recognized her from your description."

"Then you knew that Tillie was there?"

"No. I had gone to see a friend. My name was mentioned, and she spoke to me, and asked me if I was not your friend. She was going through the corridor at the time."

"And then she said who she was?"

"Yes, and then she told me about Tillie. I knew her, and was greatly interested at once."

"And you saw her?"

"Yes, but at that time she was unable to talk. Now she has recovered her reason completely, and is coming here to-night."

"Coming here?"

"Yes. We expect her at any moment. She will herself tell you what you have so long wished to know."

At that moment the front door bell rang out clear and sharp.

At that instant Martin, the footman, entered.

"Mrs. Martin and Miss Mattie are in the reception-room," he said; "Miss Mattie is with them."

"Show them all in here, Martin," said the merchant.

In a few minutes Mattie entered, bringing in Tillie, who was neatly dressed in a walking suit.

of gray and brown, followed by Mrs. Wilson, attired in black. Dave sprang to his feet, his face glowing, and hurried forward to meet his friends.

"I'm awfully glad to see you, missis, and you, too, Tillie," he cried. "I was afraid you were burned up. Sit right down and tell me all about it."

"Perhaps the young lady has something to tell that will interest you more than that, David," said Carstone.

"Oh, yes, I remember. Oh, I say, Tillie, I've found the locket. Did you know I'd lost it? Well, I've got it again, and here it is."

Dave put the locket in Tillie's hand.

Producing a small purse, Tillie took out a tiny gold key, inserted it in the lock and opened the locket. Two portraits, painted on ivory, were disclosed—one that of a child a year or two old, and the other of a woman about twenty-five.

"Let me see it," said Mr. Winterton, visibly affected, and Dave handed him the locket.

"What, what is this? I never saw that face before," he said in surprise. "Do you know who it is, Miss Tillie?"

"It is Dave's mother. He told me so when he was a little fellow. He told me all about himself, and I remembered while he forgot it."

"Then he is my son?"

"No."

"What! not my son after all?"

"No, he is the son of Mr. David Winterman, for whom he was named.

"I am certain of it, and I can prove the truth of what I say. I told Hawley the name, and he having seen your advertisement, thought that I had said Winterton, and at once determined to find the child and obtain the inheritance.

"Under the disguise of a man about town he obtained an introduction and became a frequent caller at your house, laying his plans with the utmost care.

"He thought that Dave was dead and tried to drown me, that I might not give you any information concerning him.

"Then he saw Dave and determined to play a desperate game, namely: to marry Mattie, dispose of the boy, kill you, obtain control of your property and then, by means best known to himself, deprive his wife of reason and possess everything."

"The scoundrel!" cried Mr. Winterton. "It is a good thing that we discovered the plot in season, thanks to Dave."

"When I discovered what he had been doing," continued Tillie, "after my discovery, I knew that he had followed the wrong clew, and that the mistake in a name meant the loss of all the work he had done."

"But the resemblance of Dave to my brother-in-law is so marked that—"

"You can't see so much of it in the baby's portrait," said Mattie.

"No, you cannot. By the way, Miss Tillie, has David a child's book in his possession with the name of Dan Winterton in it?"

"No, sir. His name is David, and as I said, I will show you."

So saying, Tillie took the locket, pressed back a little spring, and raised the baby's portrait

which was set in a frame and hinged, revealing on the back the following, engraved on the gold:

"DAVID WINTERMAN, Jr.

"Born December 25, 1869, San Francisco, Cal."

"His mother's name is also engraved on the back of her portrait," said Tillie. "He also has told me many times that his name was David Winterman and that he lived near San Francisco."

"Why, yes, I remember that now," cried Dave. "Is there an ocean there and a lovely bay, and is it always warm and bright and roses bloom out of doors at all times?"

"In the part of California where you lived they do," said Tillie. "Yes, that is right, and you have often asked me when a child why we had no more lovely roses."

"Then, although you have found your father, have not found my son," said Mr. Winterton.

"But I have not found him yet," said Dave. "I have only learned who he is."

"We will find him for you yet, never fear."

"And then if Dave is not Mattie's brother, he may yet prove a dangerous rival," laughed Carstone.

Advertisements were telegraphed to the San Francisco papers, asking for information concerning one David Winterman, and signed by Dave, and in two or three days the boy received a dispatch as follows:

"Coming on. Will be in New York Wednesday next. Telegraph to Chicago where to meet you."

"DAVID WINTERMAN."

On the following Wednesday Mr. Winterton met his son at Mr. Winterton's house, and recognized him before even seeing the proofs of his identity. He undertook the boy's education at once, and took him to Europe and around the world, returning to New York on Christmas when Dave had completed his twenty-five years and was now ready to go into business, having acquired a good education and the most polished manners, being a son of whom any one might be proud. During his absence Mattie and Harry Carstone had been married and had a pretty baby boy three years old, named David, and he and his parents were present at the dinner given by Mr. Winterton in honor of the return of Mr. Winterman and son. In the meantime, also, Peter Green had become a famous man of business and had petitioned the legislature to allow him to change his name to Pierre Leveret, maintaining that his former appellation was too great a handicap.

Dawson and Bill Pidgeon left the country and were seen no more. Cool Dick, against whom Dave made no charge, left the hospital, but was afterwards shot and killed in a bar-room brawl. The old woman lived long enough to see David come back a handsome, well educated and manly young fellow and Tillie became a nurse in the hospital and is there to this day. Mr. Winterton never found his own son, but he now looks upon his grandson, Dave's namesake, all the love and devotion that he would have given to the boy once known as "Shiner, the New York Bootblack."

Next week's issue will contain "WHISTLING WALT, THE CHAMPION SPY."

## CURRENT NEWS

## UNGUARDED CONVICTS PALLBEARERS FOR WARDEN

After acting as pallbearers for Warden Moseai S. Plummer, in Upper Marlboro, Md., six prisoners returned to the New Castle County Workhouse unguarded.

The men made the trip to and from Wilmington, Del., without a guard. On their arrival here they entered an automobile and were taken back to the institution without incident. The men serving terms of from one year to life imprisonment.

## ARCTIC OWLS MOVE SOUTHWARD

The Puget Sound region has for the first time twenty-five years been invaded by the great snowy Owl of the Arctic, says the *Scientific American*. This owl lives on small mammals that have been driven south by excessively severe weather, and it may have followed them into the United States in search of food; the bloodstained feathers and fur of its prey may be seen in every part of the region. These giant owls, sometimes measuring six feet across the spread of the wings, have been known to attack a man.

## ENGINEERS EXPLORING LOWER CALIFORNIA

For the purpose of exploring and making an investigation of the possible resources of the interior part of the Peninsula of Lower California, two engineers, representing the Mexican Government, were sent into the little-known wilds several months ago. A long stretch of merchantable timber covering the sides of the mountains that extend through the interior of the lower part of the peninsula has been discovered. While it has long been known to a few daring explorers that the interior of the peninsula, especially from its southern extremity to the northward for more than 200 miles, is not the desolate waste that it is commonly pictured, no general knowledge was had that commercial forests and running streams of pure water were to be found there.

It was stated by the two Government engineers that they found valleys of large areas, bordered by forests of giant trees of different varieties, and that here and there in the valleys were villages of Indians who lived in primitive ignorance of the outside world. These Indians, the explorers said, were of a lower scale of humanity than any of the other known tribes of Mexico.

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# The Vanishing Of Val Vane

— Or, —

## THE TROUBLES OF A BOY MILLIONAIRE

By WILLIAM WADE

(A SERIAL STORY)

### CHAPTER IX.

#### Val Vanishes In The Night.

"Hush! Don't breathe that name here," replied Ellen, shedding tears.

She brushed them hastily away, and whispered:

"Tell me about the other attempt to kill him."

"It was on the Palisades in New Jersey. Some one tried to push him over a cliff hundreds of feet high. He barely escaped."

"Some one! A woman?" she asked, with a shudder.

"Yes."

"Describe her! Quick, before he returns!"

Be sure Jack's description of "Mrs. Wheeler" was accurate.

"That's enough!" cried the girl. "Oh, Mr. Lorraine, don't think me a bold girl, but if we are all alive in the morning I'm going to ask you to do me a great favor. Take—, but hush! Here is—! Try, try to persuade him to go to-night."

Jack tried, but in vain.

Ellen Raeder might have helped by speaking freely, but instead she excused herself and left the room almost as soon as Val appeared, nor did she return.

Val and Jack put out the parlor lights at a little after ten and went to their room.

It was not until after midnight that Jack was able to get to sleep, but Val was in the Land of Nod in no time.

It seemed to Jack that he could not have slept many minutes when he suddenly awoke.

Val appeared to be in a profound slumber.

Feeling very thirsty, Jack got out of bed, lit the lamp and went to the bathroom, where there was running water in the basin despite the fact that it would not run in the tub.

He had his drink, and just then several shots were fired outside.

Jack looked out of the window, but could see nothing, so he picked up his little hand lamp and started to return, hearing as he did so a slight noise outside, as though something heavy had fallen.

He quickened his steps, anxious to get back to Val.

"I ought not to have left him, even for a moment," he said to himself.

Jack had gained the door now. He had left it

open; he found it both shut and bolted on the inside.

His first thought was that Val had awakened and, finding him missing, had bolted the door on him for a joke.

"Come, now, open that door!" he called in a low voice. "It's no fun standing here in my pajamas."

There was no answer.

"Val!"

Silence!

Jack began to feel queer.

"Great heavens! If anything has happened I shall never forgive myself," he thought.

He knocked. He knocked again and louder. He kicked on the door.

Not a sound came to him from behind it. Jack was now thoroughly alarmed and he banged on the door with all his might, but the same horrifying silence was maintained.

From down the corridor Ellen's voice now came:

"Oh, what is it? What's the matter?" she called.

"Don't come out; you can't do anything," replied Jack. "I went out of the room for a minute. Some one had bolted the door against me. I can't make Val answer."

A groan was the girl's answer, and then she spoke again:

"Mr. Lorraine—"

"Oh, my name is Torrance!" cried Jack, desperately. "This whole thing has been all wrong. Something has surely happened. If I could only get into my clothes I might be able to do something. As it is—"

"Listen!" called Ellen. "I fear the worst. Get down into the kitchen, where you will find a lantern hanging on the closet. Then get to the barn; lying alongside there should be a ladder. Try it by the window, Jack. Meanwhile I'll dress and be ready to help any way I can."

Jack made for the stairs and quickly discovered the kitchen, where the lantern was obtained. He unbolted the back door and hurried outside, passing around the house under the window of the bedroom, but he did not have to go to the barn after the ladder, for there it lay on the ground.

"They've got him," thought Jack. "It must be Ralph Dubey. He'll kill him! Oh, what shall I ever do!"

He pulled himself together and, placing the ladder against the window ledge, climbed up, half expecting to have a revolver thrust into his face; but it was not so.

Flashing the lantern into the room, Jack's worst fears were realized, for the bed was empty. He sprang through the window and unbolted the door.

"Ellen!" he called, excitedly. "Oh, Ellen!"

"Yes, Jack," came the prompt reply from down the corridor.

"They've got him!"

"Then may heaven help the poor boy who has fallen into Ralph Dubey's hands!"

Jack continued his investigation.

There were no signs of a struggle, but when he noticed that a very peculiar object lay on the room.

(To be continued.)

## ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

## PARROT FISH CHEWS CUD LIKE A COW

There is a creature inhabiting the warm waters of the Mediterranean which has a beak like a parrot, cheek pouches like those of a monkey and chews its cud like a cow. It is called the parrot fish.

It browses on the weeds that flourish on the sea floor of the Mediterranean. Its upper and lower jaws have become hardened into a sharp curved beak which is just the tool required for tearing off tough seaweed. Each piece snipped off by the beak is passed into one of the two curious pouches which adorn the cheeks, and there it remains until the parrot fish feels that it has collected enough for a good meal. It then chews the cud by means of the splendid set of teeth which nature has placed not in its mouth but in its throat.

## SHORE GUN HITS MOVING TARGET 20 MILES OUT

Gunners at Fort Story, Norfolk, Va., smashed moving targets twenty miles at sea with shells from fourteen and sixteen inch guns.

Twenty-two shells, each weighing 1,660 pounds, were hurled 22,000 yards at targets being towed by tug boats at sea. Airplanes observed the accuracy of the gunners, hovering over the targets while they were being shot at. The biggest guns at Fort Story were used for the first time in long distance target shooting. Some of the guns, mounted on railways, were moving while the target shooting was in progress.

Four direct hits were made. These targets were smashed to bits.

There were eight other bits, and the results were said to have exceeded the expectation of the officers. Cold weather and rough seas added to the difficulty of sighting.

## FRENZIED MINING IN BERLIN SUBURB

Zossen, a Berlin suburb at which the imperial artillery range was formerly situated, has become the scene of frenzied pilgrimages, resembling in their methods of procedure the California gold miners.

The lessee of the land has permitted all interested to dig up and sell such old shell fragments as may be unearthed, imposing the sole condition that he assumed no responsibility for injuries or accidents.

Explosions, as a matter of fact, are frequent, and every day a tiny passer-by can witness many of the pick wielders have found to their sorrow that they were hacking at a healthy hand grenade; but in spite of their experiences hundreds of poor men and women swarm to the place in search of fragments of brass, lead, copper and iron which are saleable on the spot. One prospector is said to have made 70,000 marks with his pick in a few hours.

## BORN WITH NO LEGS

Natural handicaps are no obstacle to many people. A shining example is that of B. A. Jones of Burlington, Mo., who, born without legs, has

driven a rural mail delivery route out of that town for twenty years and never complained.

Jones's route was a standard-length one of 25.5 miles out of Burlington, and since 1901, when he was appointed, he has missed only four days from the job, and those because of illness.

So interested were Post-office Department officials, who only recently had his case called to their attention, that Assistant Postmaster General Billany wrote him a letter of congratulation for his efficient service "performed in spite of a physical defect that well might have discouraged a person of less fortunate temperament, and with less determination to succeed in life." Before becoming a letter carrier Jones was a farmer.

"It seems to me," Mr. Billany wrote to Mr. Jones, "that your success may be not only interesting to all carriers, but an inspiration to any one who may feel that he is laboring under unusual or insuperable difficulties and an encouragement to them to press on in the performance of duties which choice or circumstances may require of him."

## "Mystery Magazine"

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## SIX MONTHS TO LIVE

By GEORGE BRONSON-HOWARD

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## A Red Trail

By ALEXANDER ARMSTRONG

As I stood beside the body of poor Hugh Armsley as he lay cold in the icy embrace of the death while beside him knelt his wife and a fair-haired little girl, whom a cowardly assassin's bullet had made a widow and an orphan, I registered in my own mind a solemn oath to avenge my comrade's death by bringing his slayer to the gallows.

Hugh Armsley was a brother detective here in the city of New York, and years of fellowship and association in the detective business had begot a firm friendship between us.

Hugh and I had been for some time on the trail of Dan Sibley, a most skillful counterfeiter and the one time confederate of the notorious firm of "Doyle & Brockway," the counterfeeters of U. S. bonds, of whom everybody knows.

Hugh, single-handed and alone, had attempted the capture of the desperate Sibley in an all-night drive in New York, but Sibley, who was known to have spent many years in the wilds of the Far West, was remarkably quick on "the draw," and, getting the drop on my detective "pard," he sent a leaden messenger of death through his heart, instantly killing one of the bravest and truest men I ever knew.

Firm in my purpose and true to the oath I had taken, I made the one grand and ever present object of my life to strike Dan Sibley's track.

At last I did strike his trail, and "a red trail" it proved.

Three months after the assassination of Hugh Armsley I knew to a positive certainty that "my man" was in Nevada.

He had been spotted at Pioche, and also at Gold Hill.

I was in Nevada immediately after receiving the intelligence from Frank Kelly, the great Western railway detective, who had years before been the associate of both myself and poor Hugh.

From Gold Hill I trailed Dan Sibley to the new mining claim of Rader's canyon (new in 18—, though old now).

The day after my arrival there I spotted my man.

I saw him in a saloon called the "Wild Wilderness," and with him was a smooth-faced fellow who bore the imprint of scoundrel upon every lineament of his sneaking visage as plainly as though the very devil had boldly stamped there by the hand of fate.

The very day I "spotted" him in the "Wild Wilderness" saloon I became convinced that he and his smooth-faced associate were plotting some crime.

Getting near the two, I caught these words which were uttered by Sibley:

"To-night at ten, Damond."

"All right, I'll be there," was the answer of the man whom Sibley had called Damond.

I had never seen Damond before, and of course I was entirely unknown to him, and although I was cleverly disguised, of course there was less risk of detection in shadowing Damond, trusting

that such a course would enable me to learn more of the business on foot between the villains.

I was not wrong in this supposition, and that night, after hours of close surveillance, my man Damond led me to a cabin at the end of the gulch.

The place was a dark and secluded pass, and the cabin was built against the mountainside.

Damond entered the cabin.

I crept to the door.

Scarcely had I reached it, when an awful cry of human agony burst upon the silence of the lonely gulch, and then all was still.

Intuitively I feared murder had been done within that solitary cabin, and I was about to dash forward and lend a helping hand to the poor imperiled one whose voice had reached my ears, when the door was dashed open and Dan Sibley and the man called Damond came out.

Between them they carried the body of a young man, whose attire served at once to convince me that he was a miner.

I sprang back unobserved into the shadow of a great boulder.

"Now, then, to make sure work with the body, and then to secure the papers. This night's work, if consummated properly, means a fortune for us both," said Sibley.

He dropped the feet of the body, and his companion deposited the head and shoulders of their victim upon the ground.

Then they drew their bowie knives, and started toward the very boulder behind which I crept.

It was a moment of suspense and peril for me, but my trusty revolver was in my hand.

Dan Sibley was a young but by no means bad looking fellow, and his attire was fashionable, such as is worn only by the gamblers and "sports" of the mines.

As he came toward me, closely followed by his companion, I could not help thinking that nature had been lavish in her favors with this icy-hearted desperado.

They were almost upon me, and the glint of the gleaming blades clutched in their hands, reflected by the light of the moon, flashed in my eye, when suddenly from a thicket between two trees at my side a young and beautiful girl sprang up.

I drew back out of sight as a cry burst from the girl's lips.

The next moment Dan had clutched her hand as she turned to flee, and his heavy hand fell upon her shoulder.

The knife had fallen from his hand.

Damond, his companion, was concealed by the thicket he had not yet passed.

"Miriam, you here!" exclaimed Sibley.

"Yes, I am here, Dan. Oh! have you killed him?" gasped the girl.

"Yes!" hissed Sibley, "And now I think I suspect the truth. You meant to warn him—you meant to thwart my plot and save his life."

"I did, I did! Oh, now I know that you are worse even than I suspected. I am a lost and wretched woman. Oh! why did I listen to your false vows of love; why did I leave my happy home in Omaha to follow the fortunes of a mur—"

"Hush, girl, or, by heavens, I strangle you!" thundered Sibley.

Suddenly, but without a word, the girl turned

and flew away toward the camp, never once casting a glance behind her.

The assassins then raised the body of their victim, and hurled him over the ledge, beyond which there was a fall of ten feet to the bed of a dry stream.

"Now to get the certificate of deposit, and in the morning we will draw his gold from the bank and be off," said Sibley.

He dashed into the cabin and soon reappeared with a paper in his hand.

"I have it, I have it. At last George Darrell's fortune is ours. Come, Damond, we'll now return to the camp. This has been the greatest night's work I ever did, and I am well satisfied with it," Sibley said.

In a moment they were gone.

Hastening to the edge of the cliff, over which they had thrown the body, I peered down into the darkness, and then began to climb down to the bed of the gulch.

Reaching the bottom I paused to listen for a moment.

I stood motionless, and, to my ears there presently came a groan.

I knelt beside the body, and as well as I could in the semi-gloom examined him.

Suddenly a bright light flashed in my face.

It was the light from a dark lantern, and I found myself confronted by four men in dark masks, and four rifles were leveled at my heart.

It was a terrible surprise, but quick as the lightning's flash I drew my revolver and covered the foremost of the band.

"When I count three, fire!" cried the foremost of the party, whose voice I recognized as that of Sibley.

"Hollo!" I shouted. "Your men have the drop on me, but if you pronounce the word thre, you will receive a bullet in your heart, although I fall riddled with bullets, for I've got a 'dead bead' on you, and I never miss my mark."

"That's so!" exclaimed the tough.

"Send your men away and retire with them. I know now who you are, but if you are road agents, as I suspect, let me assure you I have nothing worth robbing me of. I have just found the dead body of a friend of mine, and I mean to bury him here at once, that his remains may not be desecrated by the ravenous wolves," I went

"All right, pard. Go on with your funeral. I won't trouble you if you are out of dust. Along, boys," said Sibley.

And his gang turned away, and to himself I heard him mutter:

"This is as I want it. With our victim buried and none of his friends, the suspicion entertained by Damond that life might not have been extinct means to nothing, but I'm not sorry we came to the place when we met two of our confederates."

When the assassins were gone I set about the preparation of George Darrell. He was soon restored to consciousness. I then dressed his wounds, which were not serious, and before day I had him safely concealed in a cabin in the town.

The young man was a successful miner from California, and a new arrival at the camp who,

but a few days before, had deposited a large sum of money at the only bank in the place.

I was struck by the remarkable resemblance between him and his would-be assassin, and intuitively I suspected the real nature of the plot of which he had almost been made the victim.

Early that morning I was closeted with the bank officials.

Shortly after the opening of the bank my man, Dan Sibley, accompanied by Damond, entered it.

I was standing in a corner near the door of the president's private office.

Under the window were a couple of trusty men who had been recommended to me by the bank officials.

Sibley approached the cashier and presented the certificate of deposit he had stolen from George Darrell's cabin.

"I'd like to get the money on that, if you please," he said.

The cashier took the certificate and, looking up, asked:

"Are you George Darrell?"

"Yes, sir," was the bold answer of the assassin, who relied upon his resemblance to the man he supposed he had murdered to carry out the deception.

"That's a lie!" I cried, wheeling and facing Dan Sibley.

"You are the liar. Are you drunk or a fool that you dispute my identity?" said Sibley, feeling for his revolver, while his companion did the same.

I never made a move to "pull."

I had my plans laid in advance.

"Look behind you, Dan Sibley, and you, too, Damond," I said, quietly.

The pair of villains wheeled about, and saw that the two men under the window, which was open, had quietly drawn a bead on them with their revolvers, which rested on the window-sill.

"Trapped!" cried Sibley, and then, turning on me, he said:

"In the fiend's name, who are you?"

"Waters, the detective; and I denounce you as the murderer of Hugh Armsley, of New York," I replied.

At the same moment the door of the bank president's private office was dashed open, and George Darrell appeared, as had been arranged that he should.

"And I denounce you as my attempted murderer! Villain, impostor, demon! I am George Darrell!" cried the young miner.

As the words escaped his lips, Dan Sibley and Damond made a dash for the door.

At the same time the two revolvers in the hands of the men at the window rang out, and Damond fell, shot through the heart, while Sibley went down with a bullet in his leg.

I took Sibley back to New York, and he met his doom in the electric chair.

As for the girl whom I had seen at the cabin of Darrell, she proved to be Sibley's wife.

The rascal had induced her to run away with him, but she was only too glad to return to her parents.

George Darrell took her home, and a year later she became his happy wife.

## PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 7, 1923

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## ITEMS OF INTEREST

## LABRADOR TO HAVE HERD OF REINDEER

Plans for the placing of 1,000 Norwegian reindeer in Labrador will be carried out by an American organization, says Frederick Lawrence, representative of the company and fellow of the American Geological Society, who is proceeding north to look over the territory for a suitable location for the herd.

Mr. Lawrence said that the reindeer would be in charge of Lapland herders, who would instruct the dwellers of Labrador in the care of the animals not only for food purposes, but also for domestic work.

## FED BOOZE MASH TO HOGS

When a flying squadron of Federal Prohibition agents visited the farm of Gilbert Durham in the sparsely settled hills north of Cairo, near Delta, Ill., they thought a wave of cholera had struck the vicinity, for hundreds of hogs were stretched out in the pens on their backs, according to the story told recently by the officers.

But when the animals were prodded they managed to stagger to their feet and stumble away. It then developed that Durham, hearing of the activities of the officers, had fed hundreds of gallons of whisky mash ready for distillation to his hogs. He was arrested.

## STUDENTS BURN DEITY'S IMAGE

The Young Communists, observing the Russian Christmas, launched their widely heralded "attack upon heaven" in a grotesque carnival procession that was a mockery of the world's great religions.

The climax of the celebration came when the students greefully tossed into the flames straw and paper figures representing the deities of the Christian, Mohammedan, Jewish and Buddhist religions.

Flying stars of red balloons of the Star of Bethlehem, were borne aloft at the head of the parade, followed by processions and banners upon which were daubed cartoon of deities and saints. Jeering parades fit to make even the most devout of the Russian Church weep with rage.

## ROCK CARVINGS IN IDAHO MAY BE 30,000 YEARS OLD

Symbols and signs, believed to have been chiseled anywhere from 400 to 30,000 years ago, have been discovered on lava rocks in a remote section of Owyhee county, Southwestern Idaho.

The inscriptions bear striking resemblance to Chinese alphabet characters. The inscribed rocks are in the vicinity of several caves which scientists will explore this summer. Two distinct types of carvings, ideographic and pictographic, have been noted.

Archaeologists believe the ideographic antedates by many years the pictographic. Both examples have been found on a single rock. Near by is another rock with a possible third system, supposed to antedate both the others but which has weathered beyond possibility of deciphering.

Indians say the more modern carvings are the work of their forefathers, but assert the others are the work of evil spirits. Resemblance of the inscriptions to Chinese characters is taken by some to substantiate the theory that the early American Indians descended from shipwrecked Chinese or came from a race which migrated from Asia by way of Bering Strait.

## LAUGHS

Teacher—Now who can tell me what political economy is? Mike (embryo Tammany statesman)—Gittin' the most votes for the least money.

A little boy having his music lesson was asked by his teacher: "What are the pauses?" And the quick response was: "Things that grow on pussy cats."

"Little girls should be seen and not heard, Ethel." "I know, mamma. But if I'm going to be a lady when I grow up I've got to begin practicing talking some time, you know."

"You can't beat Jones for breaking it gently." "What did he do?" "When Smith went hunting in the Adirondacks, Jones went and told Mrs. Smith her husband was a dead game sport."

"How did you come by the black eye, Dolan?" asked Mr. Rafferty. "The boys resented it when I called a strike." "Is it a labor leader you are, then?" "No, I was umpirin' a ball game."

An inquisitive young gentleman in Ode-  
Mo., met this advertisement in a local paper:  
"Young man, some woman dearly loves you.  
Would you know who she is? Send ten cents to  
Occult Diviner. Address as below, and learn  
her name." He sent the money, and received this  
answer: "Your mother."

Teacher—What is an average? Harry—  
Something that you hit. Teacher—What's that  
you say? Harry—Something that you hit.  
Teacher—What nonsense! Harry—  
I said you say yourself yesterday that you can  
strike an average.

## INTERESTING NEWS ARTICLES

## 850 MILLION RUBLES FOR GOOD WINTER COAT

C. J. Frederickson, Y. M. C. A. worker, returned the other day from Russia, gives these samples of the high cost of living in the land of the Soviets:

"Winter coat with astrakhan collar from 379,000,000 to 850,000,000 rubles, according to quality; fall overcoats, 260,000,000 to 770,000,000; suits from 300,000,000 to 800,000 rubles; one pair trousers, 117,000,000 rubles; one suit of underwear, 70,000,000 rubles; one pair of socks, 25,000,000 rubles; felt hat, 22,000,000 rubles; fur cap or hat from 40,000,000 rubles up; one collar, 3,000,000 rubles; handkerchiefs, 25,000,000 rubles a dozen; boots from 100,000,000 rubles up.

## STILL IN BARN BRINGS TROUBLE

When Lorin Hackett, a farmer of the central section of South Dakota, selected his barn as a good place in which to operate a still for the manufacture of moonshine liquor, he thought he was real "foxy" and that the authorities never would be able to locate the still or discover that he was engaged in the manufacture of liquor.

The other day the still exploded and set fire to his barn, which was reduced to ashes. One of his most valuable horses was burned so badly that it had to be shot. Incidentally the burning of the barn has brought a series of misfortunes to Hackett. He had the barn insured, but owing to the fact that the fire had its origin in the explosion of the still he will be unable to collect the insurance. In addition he has been arrested on the charge of manufacturing liquor and has been held for a court trial.

When the fire was discovered several neighbors went to the scene to aid Hackett in fighting the flames. Some of these men saw the ruins of a liquor still in the debris of the burned barn. Hackett refused to permit an investigation to be made by the neighbors and a search warrant was obtained. Then parts of a still, some mash and two gallons of liquor were found. The arrest of Hackett followed.

His loss will reach several thousand dollars and will be total because of the fact that the fire was started by the explosion of the still, invalidating his fire insurance policies.

## CAMERA CATCHES BULLETS IN FLIGHT

An actual photograph of a rifle bullet in flight, traveling at a speed of 3,600 feet a second, is now possible by means of apparatus and methods conceived by Philip P. Quayle, assistant physicist of the Bureau of Standards, Department of Commerce. And what appears as even more remarkable, the timing of the photographic mechanism is so deftly arranged that the progress of the bullet is not impeded and the visual image of it is free from obscuring by wires or other parts of the operating device.

S. R. Winters, writing in a recent issue of *Practical Electrics*, gives the following data on this achievement.

## \$5,000 APPLE TREE PUT IN WIRE CAGE

A wire cage has been constructed around the "\$5,000 apple tree" in the orchard of Lewis Mood, a farmer living at Ferrell, in South Harrison Township, Gloucester County, N. J. Mood recently sold a branch from this particular tree, producing an entirely new variety of apple, to one of the big nursery firms of the country for what is said to be a record-breaking price for this fruit.

The public will have to wait two years or more before it can learn very much about the Mood apple, as it is being guarded with the greatest secrecy, indicated by the erection of the stout wire cage entirely around the tree. All that is known so far is that it is a red apple of exceptional size and sweetness. There is no other apple just like it in this country, so far as horticultural experts have been able to determine.

This new variety will be subjected to the most exhaustive tests under various climatic and soil conditions throughout the United States, for the nursery firm which has bought it is willing to place it upon the market. Orchard science as applied through top budding will make it possible to produce the new fruit in quantities large enough for experimental purposes within a year or two.

The new apple is purely an accident of nature, being a freak from one of the ordinary orchard varieties. Mood noticed several years ago that one of the branches of a particular tree in his orchard was bearing an apple that was different both in color and flavor, from the fruit from other limbs on the same tree. He watched this apple carefully for season after season. He took off some buds and started other trees. The big red Mood apples were in such demand among his customers that last season he sold \$75 worth of apples from the original tree alone.

A representative of a nursery company learned that the Jersey farmer had an apple that was attracting attention and he called to see Mood. "I had thought of trying to put out this new apple myself," said Mood in talking of his "find." "I put a price on the apple that I thought would keep those fellows from pestering me about selling it. They got the head of their company here to look over the apple and to see the tree. After several conferences we finally came to terms."

Just what these terms are are set forth in a bill of sale and a surveyor's record of the exact location of the tree, which have been filed in the Gloucester County Clerk's office at Woodbury. Even the particular branch of the tree is designated in this unusual record.

According to the agreement on file, which is corroborated by Mood in personal conversation, he has received \$1,000 in cash and is to get \$1,000 in "royalties" at the rate of 2 cents for each bud that is taken from the original branch or any trees developed from it. These buds will be grafted upon other stock to produce trees of the new variety.

## PLUCK AND LUCK GOOD READING

### SLIDE UNDER TRAIN ALIVE

Two boys, Michael Lynch, 10 years old, and Tony Pedestro, 12, coasting down the western slope of the first Watchung Mountain, Caldwell, N. J., passed over the Erie Railroad tracks beneath a fast-moving passenger train without injury.

Several persons saw the sled bearing the youngsters come out from beneath the train. The boys later explained that they did not hear the train's approach and that they had passed the safety line before they were aware of the danger.

### ANOTHER GERMAN PRODIGY

Germany has another memory prodigy in a 21-year-old girl, who has mastered the art of brain control over muscle most completely. She sings a German song, writes an English sentence with her right hand, and a French sentence with her left hand at the same time. Also writes a sentence in one language backwards, and another in a different language in the regular way. She can calculate with one hand and write dictation backwards with the other. She can also begin a sentence at both ends and complete it in the middle, using both hands. She does several other things which really seem beyond the limit of credulity.

### CLEAR \$25,000 IN 5 SECONDS

The quick wit and prescience of one of the oldest floor traders on the New York Stock Exchange brought him recently an almost instantaneous profit of approximately \$255,000 in a double transaction and the congratulations of fellow-members on the sudden Christmas pile he had amassed for himself. The two transactions occupied not more than five seconds.

The profit was made in Pan-American Petroleum B stock, in which an over-night stock dividend of 20 per cent. had been unexpectedly announced. There was a big crowd of floor traders about the Pan-American post just before the closing, and the broker who made the turn was on the outskirts of the crowd.

The instant the bell tapped he shouted to those about him: "Bid 80 for 5,000 Pan-American B." The proposition was accepted by a broker who had 5,000 shares on his books to sell at 79. In the meanwhile, on the other side of the crowd the stock was selling very much higher, and the trader who had bought the 5,000 shares sold out at 85, by signaling across the "crowd."

There was a spread opening from 80 to 86½, the total at these figures being 20,000 shares, in which the 5,000 shares handled by the veteran, both in buying and selling transactions, were included.

Members of the Stock Exchange on the floor termed the trade "lucky."

### SWEEPINGS NET MILLIONS

Would you pay \$1,000 for the privilege of cleaning a dirty floor? There's a man in New York who made a profit of \$5,000 by doing that very thing.

Some months ago a manufacturing jeweller on Pearl street decided that twenty-five years was long enough for any sane man to work and at once set about the business of retiring. Among his assets was listed the privilege of sweeping the floor of his factory, and he called for bidders.

One offered \$1,000, which was refused with open amusement; another bid \$2,000 and was turned down, and then a third, after carefully appraising the floor, ceiling and walls, concluded to take a long chance and bid \$4,000.

First the bidder had the floor cleaned carefully. Then a carpenter was called in. The floor boards were taken up, and after the sweepings that had piled up under them had been carefully collected new boards were put down. The old boards were planed off, and the shavings, together with the sweepings and the dust from the ceiling and walls, were burned.

Here stepped in the modern alchemist. The ashes were turned over to him, and through a secret process of his own he recovered enough gold, silver and platinum to net the successful bidder a cash profit of \$5,000.

But modern alchemy does not stop at mere sweepings. There are many other things, small and apparently useless, that thrown into the retort are transmuted into precious metals. Even the chamois skin blackened by its contact with silver and gold is not despised.

Cloths used for cleaning precious metals are saved and burned when no longer usable and the ashes sent to a refiner to be subjected to a recovery process. Even the water in which the metal workers washed their hands was saved. Poured into barrels, it was allowed to settle and the sediment was taken out, dried and delivered to a refining company for processing.

If a man asks you in an indifferent tone if you have any old gas mantles lying around, don't think he is a harmless lunatic who is collecting them in obedience to the mandates of a diseased mind. He isn't. Each mantle has a tiny bit of precious metal which may be recovered by assaying. There are folks who are making money out of the worn out gas mantles.

And the alchemist! Is he long and spare, with shaggy gray hair and a pointedly thin face, into the depths of a mysterious conglomeration, slowly changing form in the vessel before him? Not at all. He is the typical alert business man. He has an up-to-date office downtown and his firm runs half a dozen smelters and refineries, salvaging annually from \$10,000,000 to \$15,000,000 from wastage.

While the amounts recovered in individual cases are not large, as a rule, running from \$20 to \$30 annually for manufacturing jewelers, the aggregate is a fairly respectable sum.

But don't think that the business is confined merely to dealers in precious metals.

The bookbinderies, too, are frugal. Here the same care is exercised to save all waste paper, bindings and covers which have a showing of gold. These are submitted to the test of fire and the ashes turned over to the alchemist for conversion into gold.

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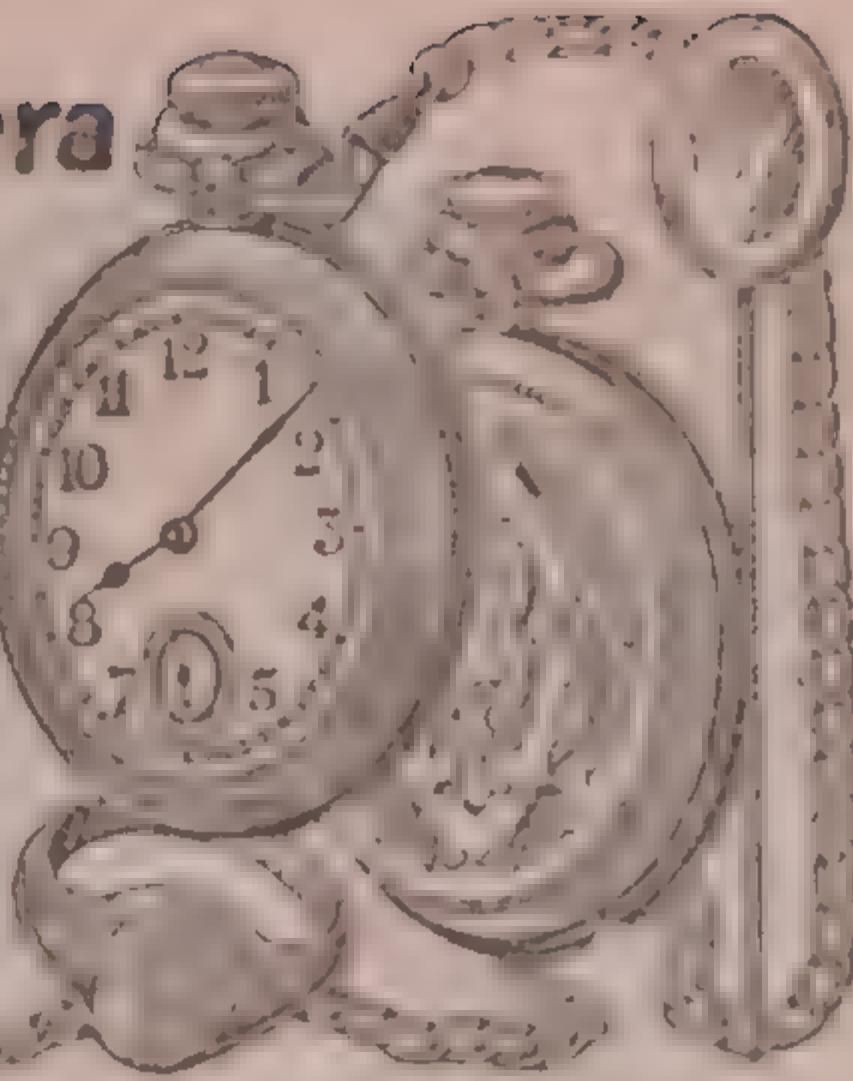
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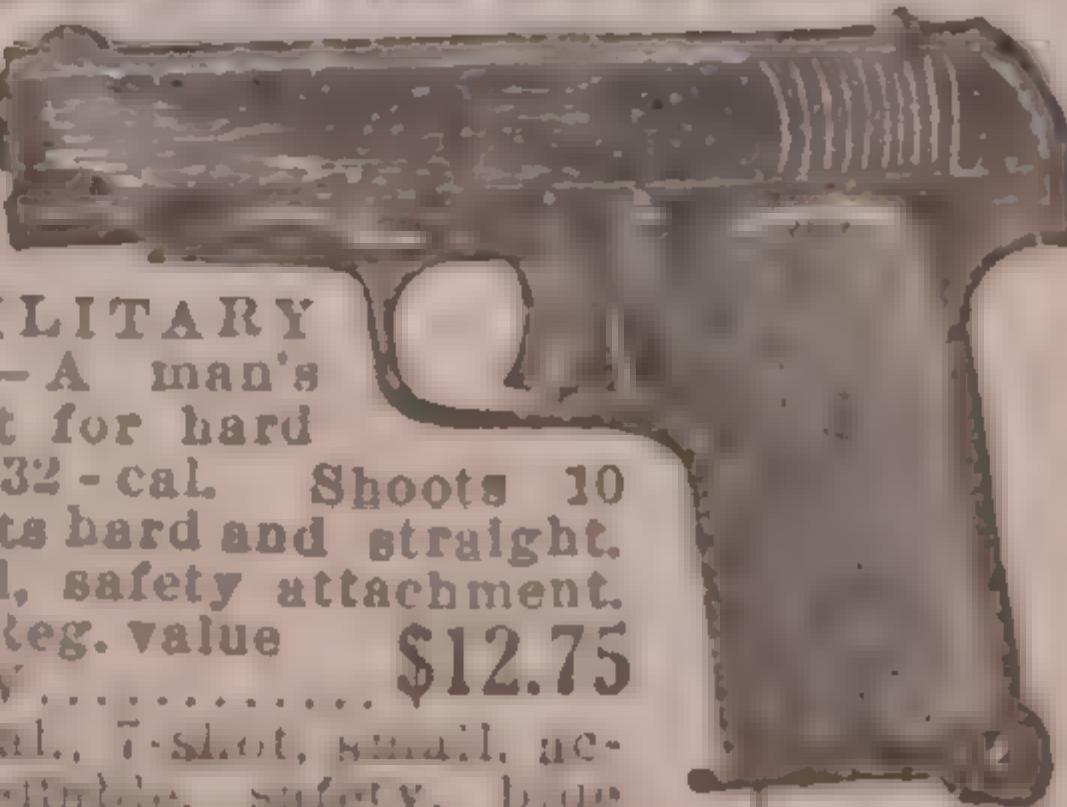
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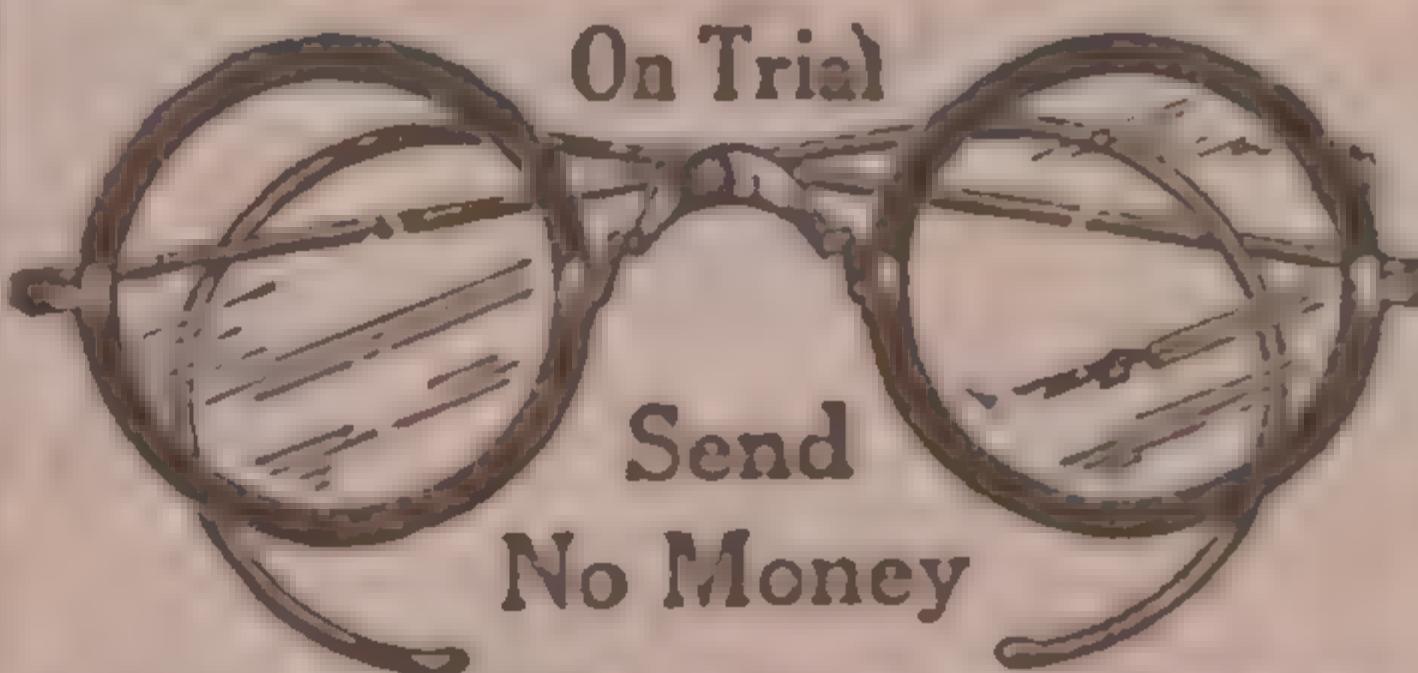
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HINDUS  
BATH  
IN RIVER  
WHERE  
CORPSES  
FLOAT

Of course I had  
read about Ben-  
ares, but I should  
think the average  
American of  
healthy tastes  
and decent im-  
pulses would be  
content with a  
fleeting glance at  
the sacred city,  
for what goes on  
at Benares re-  
volts every mod-  
ern idea, not only  
of religion but of  
sanitation and  
even of common  
sense.

How any people  
can be called en-  
lightened or even  
half-civilized,  
whose religion  
teaches them to  
practice the  
things for which  
Benares is fa-  
mous, I cannot  
understand. For  
they do bathe in  
and drink the  
water of the  
Ganges, and that  
is only the begin-  
ning of the dis-  
gusting, horrify-  
ing performance.

We saw it all  
one morning  
from a little  
boat; we arrived  
at 6.30 o'clock,  
and by 9 we were  
unable longer to  
endure the sights,  
they were so re-  
volting. First  
there were the  
ablutions, which  
were not merely  
washing the body  
outwardly, but  
were accompanied  
by gargling and  
blowing of noses,  
to the accompani-  
ment of throwing  
garlands of mari-  
golds and jas-  
mine into the  
water. Past us  
floated numerous  
corpses.

As we watched,  
the carcass of a  
big steer had  
floated by.

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